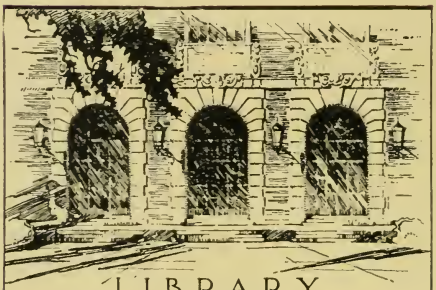
Eliza Giffard

Vergnis Flintshire



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THE

MYSTERIOUS HAND.

A ROMANCE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

Eliza Gifford ~ Sequis Hantshire

THE

Mysterious Hand;

OR,

SUBTERRANEAN HORROURS!

A ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

AUGUSTUS JACOB CRANDOLPH.

Ordina in guisa
Gli umani eventi il ciel, che tutti a tutti
Siam necessarj, e 'l più felice spesso
Nel più misero trova
Che sperar, che temer.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.
(Successors to Lane, Newman, & Co.)
LEADENHALL-STREET.
1811.

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS,

THE PRINCESS MARY.

MADAM,

With much of the anxiety of an author, and all the attachment of a subject, I dedicate to you these volumes. They are your's, Princess, as a tribute to real excellence, from admiration the most sincere.

Blessed with seclusion and tranquillity, I court not, I desire not popularity. My ambition aspires to a nobler prize, and your acceptance of my labours is the great and only object of my wishes.

As the Daughter of our beloved Sovereign, my loyalty to you is an obligation; and as the model of my heroine, this dedication is, perhaps, a duty.

But the resemblance of the good and gentle Julia is not that of person. There are charms which her's does not possess.

May I call this production mine? Did you not inspire it? and, without your approbation, must it not perish? I shall, therefore, dare to hope that it will be rescued from oblivion. The laurel that emerges out of darkness and the earth, from the sun receives its being, and by the sun it is preserved.

THE AUTHOR.

November, 1810.

THE

MYSTERIOUS HAND.

CHAP. I.

Non era l'andar suo cosa mortale;
Ma d'angelica forma; e le parole
Sonavan' altro, che pur voce umana.

.....

E pur tante bellezze, e sì pregiate
Altro non sono, che un' opaco velo,
Con cui dell' Alma la beltà velate.

.....

——————When she speaks,
The air, a chartered libertine, is still;
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,
To steal her sweet and honied sentences.

MR. Bolton was a widower, and Julia was his only child. These pages shall relate their story. Never was there a worthier man than Mr. Bolton. Nature had

bestowed on him a sound head and a feeling heart, and fortune, not less liberal, had gifted him with a large estate. His age was fifty-two; goodness beamed in his countenance, mildness attended his every motion, and equanimity marked his every look. Envied by the worldly, esteemed by the virtuous, loved by his friends and blessed by the poor, Mr. Bolton was, nevertheless, unhappy. The loss of his wife, who had died about a year before the period when this history commences, left an impression of sadness on his mind that no fortitude could assuage, no time remove. In addition to which, his darling, the delight of his heart and the pride of his age, his beloved Julia, had, in consequence of her mother's death, been attacked by a nervous complaint, that threatened to decline into a consumption.

This

This was the opinion of the most eminent physicians in London.

Shocked to the very soul by the alarming information, he hastily prepared, under their advice, to seek a southern climate, and court continual diversion for her by an incessant change of scene.

Julia, melancholy and depressed, prepared for her travels with little of the ardour of a youthful mind, and few of the brilliant expectations of a sanguine disposition. Happily, her dejection was not constitutional. Arrived in France, the novelty of her situation, and the rapidity of her journey, gave a new current to her thoughts, and speedily arrested the progress of her disease.

Miss Bolton's education had led to the useful rather than the ornamental. She was well-bred, but she was far from being

all-accomplished. She had still much to learn, and she had yet, as a young lady should have, to take from him whom her heart and her father should select, that impression of character, those manners and those habits, which were to perfect her as a woman. Alive to every gentle impulse, the docile Julia had been instructed from her infancy to obey and to oblige. She was too thin to be perfectly beautiful, but being feminine almost to timidity, and graceful even to elegance, with elasticity in her step, and chearfulness in her countenance, it was not possible to see her with indifference, or to know her without admiring her. She possessed playfulness of wit and ductility of temper, quickness of perception and solidity of understanding: no vanity deformed her innocence, and no affectation disguised her simplicity. Her articulation

articulation was distinct, her delivery was correct, and her voice, to say that it was sweet, would not express its excellence; it was that varied and perfect melody which proceeds from clearness of sound, delicacy of accent, and tenderness of intonation, united in the human organ, and breathing truth, eloquence and animation. Like the strains of fairy musick, fancied by some poets, it engaged the ear with a gentleness so winning, with a harmony so unusual, that to hear this interesting girl was to experience a pleasure not less rare than it was refined. Such were the father and his daughter.

They travelled through France in a manner suitable to their fortune and their habits, displaying no ostentation, but presenting unequivocal marks of wealth and respectability. Every where they were

received with distinction, and treated with flattering attentions, but no where did they remain longer than three or four days. Mr. Bolton willingly sacrificed his love of rest and quiet to promote the health of his daughter, and she, with juvenile volatility, readily consented to be whirled with rapidity, and without intermission, from one town to another.

In the latter end of May they arrived at Bourdeaux. Here they purposed to remain for a few weeks. It was manifest that Julia's health was restored. Her father saw that there no longer existed a necessity for velocity of movement, and he gladly availed himself of this opportunity to indulge in repose. In truth, he had not, since his wife's death, been less unhappy than he was at present. She on whom he doted, she on whose welfare his existence depended,

depended, was now out of danger. Now he could look at her with satisfaction. The hue of health overspread her cheek; the smile of content played upon her countenance.

CHAP. II.

Fortune, dont la main couronne
Les forfaits les plus inouis,
Du faux éclat qui t'environne
Serons nous toujours éblouis?

.....

Trovasi ancor chi per sottrarsi a' numi
Forma un nume del caso, e vuol, ch' il mondo
Da una mente immortal retto non sia:
Cecita temeraria! empia follia!

.....

Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile,
And cry content to that which grieves my heart;
And frame my face to all occasions:
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor;
Deceive more slily than Ulysses cou'd;
And, like a Simon, take another Troy;
I can add colours even to the cameleon;
Change shapes with Proteus, for advantages;
And set th' aspiring Catiline to school.

Truth shall govern my pen, simplicity shall guide my narration. No tale of impossibility shall stain my veracity, and never shall I be convicted of falsehood. If I write a book that may amuse, I intend that

that it shall likewise instruct. If any of the characters I describe shall appear uncommon, the incidents incredible, or the situations romantick, let not me be blamed. I deserve no reproach. Nature in the innumerable movements of her admirable mechanism, in the perpetual revolutions of her immense empire, occasionally produces events that are unaccountable, and beings that are monstrous.

The Count Egfryd at this period lived in Bourdeaux, where he possessed a magnificent hotel. The Count had attained his thirtieth year. His figure was well proportioned, his face was sensible and regular, and in his whole appearance there was a striking air of dignity. His ancestors had been for ages noble, and his fortune was of princely extent. Impenetrable dissimulation, and a serenity that no

accident could disturb, were peculiarly his. He was deep in design, vitious in his propensities, bold in the execution of plots, inventive in resources, persevering and indefatigable. With an assumed frankness that might deceive even the eye of penetration, a mildness that never deserted him, and a chearfulness that was constitutional, he possessed the polished graces of a refined courtier, and the intellectual advantages of an excellent education. His speech was fluent and his style elegant. The subtlety of his mind, aided by early habits of metaphysical disquisition, gave him a decided advantage in the art of persuading: but he seldom argued. His habits were voluptuous and dissipated, and the gratification of his revenge was with him an important consideration. His indulgences often partook of cruelty, and his

his pleasures not unfrequently led him into the perpetration of crimes. But to him cruelty and crime were indifferent. He was an atheist. He had already offended against the most awful of the commandments of his Maker, and against the most solemn of the laws of society. He never felt remorse, and he was incapable of fear. To gratify a trifling wish he would not have hesitated to commit any atrocity, provided he could commit it with security; and of two pleasures equally grateful to him, one simple and innoxious, the other attainable only by vice, he would have preferred the latter. What I have drawn is but a faint sketch of the diabolical Egfryd; but in the course of these pages, enough will be narrated to convey with accuracy his detestable delineation. He was married, and he had one child.

An

An acquaintance that soon ripened into intimacy was formed between our English travellers and this family. Julia was charmed with the easy address and insinuating manners of the Count. He appeared to her the most accomplished man she had ever seen, the most ingenuous, the most noble. She observed with surprise, that the serenity of his manner, and the gentleness of his tones, had the power of banishing all agitation from the minds of those with whom he conversed: that every commotion of the passions instantly subsided at his approach, and that it was impossible to feel constraint in his presence. In her estimation he was the true model of a perfect gentleman; nor, could his depravity have been subtracted, was she much mistaken.

He, demon-like, saw the impression that he

he made on a female, essentially different from all those whom he had seen before, and incomparably superior to every other whom he had known. Already he plotted her ruin; already he indulged a deadly passion, that had for its object her total and irremediable destruction. Mr. Bolton thought of his new acquaintance with little less respect and admiration than his daughter. His unsuspecting and guileless nature yielded involuntarily to this libertine's dangerous attentions, and in his society the good man experienced and submitted to the fascination of grace united to gaiety, unstudied politeness, modest eloquence, and knowledge that seemed little short of inexhaustible, and forgot the existence of his grief.

The Count had a castle on one of his estates in the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux:

deaux: it was called the *Chateau de St. Uldrich,* and it afforded the happiest specimens of that species of architecture which is denominated Gothick. It was in truth a beautiful and magnificent fabrick. Thither he and the *Comtesse* invited the father and daughter, who consented to remain there for a month.

Having arrived at the *chateau,* Julia employed two whole days in traversing the galleries and the apartments, in admiring the numerous decorations of the building, and interrogating the Count and her father upon the more prominent objects of her curiosity. In another chapter I shall give a description of the *chateau,* by which it will appear, that her admiration was not the wonder of infancy or ignorance, but a just tribute to real excellence.

Julia, however, had time and inclination

tion to devote the third evening after her arrival to the duties of friendship. The following letter to the earliest of her acquaintances, which, by accident, came lately into my possession, will serve to shew the state of her mind at this time.

" MY DEAR ELIZA,

" At length I have an hour to myself—that hour shall be your's. You will expect, in the first place, I know, to hear something about my health. Know then that I am quite well. Such rattling, such flying as I have had! I thought I should like travelling, but it far exceeds my most sanguine expectations. Though the days are now long, I think each of them infinitely too short. I have been in

one

one continued bustle since I left England. My papa bids me be composed, and Ellen requests me to leave every thing to her. It is all in vain. I cannot be quiet. But don't suppose that I am become industrious since I saw you; on the contrary, I am sorry to tell you that I never work, and I cannot read. How can I work, read, draw, or play, or any thing else while we keep moving about so? But now that we are to remain in one spot for some weeks, I will try to do some good.

"Oh! Eliza, I have so much to tell you, much, that I don't know where to begin. Shall I tell you first of Theodore? (so my father calls *Monsieur Dalbert*) No, I did not see him till we arrived at Bourdeaux. Shall I commence with the *Chateau de St. Uldrich?* or shall I——? My dear Eliza, you must excuse me. I know not what I

am

am saying, doing, thinking. But come, I must mention something.

"You must know then that when we arrived at Bourdeaux, my father went to pay his respects to the *Marquise de Narsey;* she visited me the next morning, and in the evening we all went to the theatre to see a new piece. This new piece, you must know, was the prettiest thing I ever saw; and so my father and the Marchioness thought. He, who, you know, is so curious, inquired the name of the author—and who should this prove to be but *Monsieur Dalbert!* But who is *Monsieur Dalbert?* Why, my dear, his father was General Dalbert's son, that was disinherited by him for marrying a poor Frenchwoman. The General being our friend and neighbour in England, my father took some trouble

trouble to find out the author, and he invited him to dine at our hotel.

" I had expected a nasty, pedantick, self-sufficient fellow, and therefore took no great pains at my *toilette*. I was sitting behind the drawing-room door when he entered, and only think of my surprise on seeing, instead of the person I had pictured to myself, one of the handsomest and most elegant young men I ever saw. He accosted my father in English, and addressed me in the same language, with that air of ease and politeness that we do not frequently see in England. You see I already assume the airs of a traveller.

" In his countenance and accents, there was a charm that I cannot describe to you. I soon found he had spoken English merely in compliment to us, for insensibly we all

in

in a short time conversed in French. I don't know how it was, but every time that I spoke, or that he looked at me, I felt a something of embarrassment, together with a faltering of my speech, that I am not accustomed to. A more polite or agreeable man, however, I never met. But enough of Mr. Dalbert. No, one word more—he has, my dear Eliza, without exception, the finest black eyes, the whitest teeth, and the prettiest hands I ever saw. The epithet that best applies to him, I think, is interesting. Nobody can be more free from that lively gesticulation which Frenchmen generally posses than he. He is, as they say, *sans façon*. He is uncommonly tall; I am sure he is above six feet; and, to complete his picture, he is very brown, and very thin; he is, besides, perfectly well made. Poor fellow, he

he has for years supported his mother and himself entirely by the labours of his pen. I understand his mother is at present in the country. My father thinks him one of the best writers of the present day; and certainly that dramatick piece we saw was admirable. I should tell you there is a calmness about him, mingled with a slight portion of melancholy, that would please you infinitely. But shall I never have done with this man?

"We have met with another charming man, the Count d'Egfryd. But he is married. He and the *Comtesse* are excessively attentive to us. I don't know how we shall be able to repay all their civilities. The Count is one of the most amiable men in the world—but the *Comtesse,* between you and me, I don't admire with enthusiasm. Her manners and disposition are diametrically

diametrically opposite to mine, and therefore we shall never be called the inseparables. However, nothing can exceed her politeness or attention. We are now at their castle, about ten miles from Bourdeaux. It is a Gothick building, but such a building! No, never did you see any thing half so handsome. But it is very late, and I am getting sleepy. Good night, and believe me your sincere friend,

"JULIA BOLTON.

Chateau de St. Uldrich."

Theodore Dalbert, after the departure of Mr. Bolton and Julia from Bourdeaux, was melancholy and uneasy. He felt depressed without knowing why, and thought of his English friends at one time with affection, at another time with regret. His studies

studies no longer amused him. His literary projects no longer occupied him. He could not sit at home. He could not remain abroad.

In this mood he was entering the narrow street in which was his humble habitation, on the second day after the departure of his friends, when, as he passed by a dark passage, a man, muffled in a large coat, suddenly darted on him with a stiletto, and aimed a blow at his breast. Theodore, most fortunately, had a book within his coat, through the leaves of which the instrument pierced even to his skin. But for this the blow must have been mortal. It was intended to be so.

The assassin had not time to repeat his attack. Swift as lightning, his intended victim caught and disarmed the murderous hand, and with his *parapluit* warded

off

off a similar blow from a second ruffian, who now advanced.

The first, Theodore, though alarmed, rushed on with irresistible vigour, and pierced with the stiletto that had been a moment before directed against himself. The wretch dropped with a groan, pouring out his heart's blood. The contest now was more equal; it was between two men, each armed alike. Theodore, accustomed to fencing from his infancy, immediately saw the mode of fight he should adopt; this was to retreat, and to defend himself till his adversary should give him an opening; accordingly he did so, and in less than a minute his foe, wounded, prostrate, and disarmed, lay before him. Curious to know the motive for such an outrage, he conducted the miscreant to his apartment, dressed his

wound, and having made him sit down, considered with attention his countenance and person.

A figure more uncouth, or a face less human, can hardly be conceived. The former heavy, shapeless, and gigantick; the latter black, lowering, and malignant. His eyes alone would have rendered him diabolical; small, dark, and unsteady, their squint was never to be caught; sheltered by jaw-bones of brutal projection, and brows of preternatural and gloomy exuberance, they shot their felon glances with ominous obliquity. His lips, which were never closed, displayed a cavern not to be surveyed without disgust, and were extended in swolen masses from one ear to the other. His nose was broad, flat, and rough. His ears, raw and discoloured, seemed monstrous excrescences of flesh, rather

rather hanging from than growing to the head, with a weight that sunk them to the shoulders. His cheeks displayed numerous eruptive marks of gross intemperance, and his forehead was wrinkled into a thousand folds, and every fold contained a frown. His skin was foul and sallow. His hair was black and crispy. He had the stutter of habitual and designing falsehood, and his voice was deep, hoarse, and savage. To look at the monster without horror was impossible; to meet him in a lonely place without feeling alarm, was to be superior to the weakness of fear.

Such was the person to whom Theodore, with a composed countenance and with mild accents, addressed himself. And here, as well as on future occasions, I shall take the liberty granted to all historians, of rendering into the language which I em-

ploy, what was originally uttered in another tongue—" What has happened this night," said Theodore, " or any thing I may now say, the thought of your companion lying dead, or the recollection of my clemency, will have no effect on you. I will not prosecute you, because my principles forbid my becoming an accessory in taking away the life of any one ; and if you were to be tried you would be executed. My principles I shall not explain to you. It is probable you would not understand me. All I require of you is to tell me what induced you to attempt my assassination. What injury has any one to accuse me of? Who employed you ? Who and what was your companion ? Who are *you?* and what benefit were you to reap from my death ? Speak with confidence and candour. By my honour I will never reveal

reveal what you shall communicate to me this night, without your permission."

The man, at language so unexpected, looked surprised and incredulous. A momentary expression, resembling the sneer of contempt, passed across his brutal visage. He coughed, hemmed, raised his shoulders, scratched his nasty head with one hand, the other he drew across his nostrils, elevated his frightful eyebrows, awkwardly endeavoured to give to his feeling of security some appearance of gratitude, and shook the apartment by the vulgar motion of his enormous feet, which, as he sat, danced with lively action on the floor.—" Sir," said he, " I know not of any harm you have done, nor any enemy of your's. All that I know is that I was to get a thousand livres*, and my

* About £50 Sterling.

companion as much more, if we despatched you."—"From whom?"—"I know not, Sir."—"Who employed you?"—"I don't know, Sir."—"Don't know!"—"Why, Sir, the story I have to tell you is a queer one. I will tell you, because it is impossible not to trust you; and because I can invent no tale at present that would impose on you. My employer is unknown to me. I can't even guess who he is. He gives me my orders in such a way that I never can discover him, and he pays me so well that I never disobey him. Besides if I did, I should never be employed again, and it's not improbable but that I should be murdered for my pains."

"In such a way that you can't discover him! explain yourself."—"Oh! if I knew him, it would be the best day to me I ever saw. By threatening to *peach* I could have any

any sum of money, for I'm sure he's woundy rich. I was a smuggler, please your honour, at Toulon, and I had got some little reputation, I believe, though I say it, for my spirit. But that's neither here nor there. I had been more than once in prison, but I need not lose time in telling you about that. It is now about fourteen months since I got a letter in an odd sort of hand; I believe I have it about me; I will show it to you. Let me look for it. It will explain all this here business. Aye, here it is."

Saying this he produced from an old pocket-book a dirty piece of paper, which with some difficulty Theodore read. It was to the following effect—" Gaspar Pontgebre, I have seen you, and I know your character. You are poor. Become my agent, and you shall never want for

money. Inquire every Friday at the post-office of St. Marc for any letter directed to you. Whatever you shall be enjoined to do in the letters you will there receive, execute with promptitude and precision. I now enclose you four hundred livres* as an earnest of my generosity. Indiscretion or disobedience will cost you your life. You shall never be employed without receiving a gratuity. Some of my commands will require the agency of two persons. On Sunday next at two you will meet Conrad D'Aufrine at the *cabaret* with the green door, near the convent of Dominicans, *Fauxbourg du Pleudey*. He is an Italian, and a bravo by profession. He will wear a red waistcoat. I shall instruct him how to know you. Accost him, and ask to see my letter to him. Show him this.

* About £20 Sterling.

this. Do what I shall in that point out, and on the Friday after you shall have performed those orders, you will find a letter for you in the office with five hundred livres*."

"Dark and horrible scheme! Did you meet this Conrad?"—"I did, Sir. He it is who now lies dead in the street. We did many a job for our unknown employer, and were always handsomely paid. The last required of us you will read in this letter, which I received yesterday."

He now produced a letter, which was in the hand-writing of the unknown. It ran thus—"Gaspar Pontgebre, a young man, named Theodore Dalbert, lives on the first floor of the house No. 23, *Rue St. Sulpice*, in Bourdeaux. He is an author. He wears black, is twenty-five years of age,

* About £25 Sterling.

six feet high, brown and thin, with dark hair, black eyes, and straight nose. He is handsome. His deportment is grave and dignified, and his countenance mild and engaging. I hate him. Watch him, know him, murder him. I enclose two hundred livres*. You shall have two thousand† more, to be divided between you and Conrad, on the Friday after I shall have learned your success. Be particularly attentive to this order. No command you ever received was half so important to me. Dare to disobey. Dare to tamper with him. Dare even to whisper your employment, and inevitable destruction shall overwhelm you. I shall pursue, I shall find, I shall strike; no power shall protect, no flight preserve you. Know, miscreants, that with respect to you I am omnipotent.

* About £10 Sterling. † About £100 Sterling.

nipotent. But know, likewise, that if you obey me but a little while longer, a happy independence shall certainly await you." Theodore shuddered as he read this infernal scroll, of which the writing was evidently disguised.

"You see, Sir," said the assassin, "what danger I run in showing you these letters, but as for his threats, I don't care that for them," snapping his fingers. "He thinks to frighten me into silence, but I can tell him, that but for his presents this would have little effect. Conrad and I were thinking, no later than yesterday, of publishing something about his commissions, in order if possible to discover, by means of any attack that should be made upon us, some clue by which to find him out. But Conrad thought we played a surer

game in holding our tongues, and Conrad was a clever fellow."

"Well," said Theodore, "I thank you, friend, for your information. I told you I should never reveal your secret without your permission. I never will; but I am not without hopes that you will give me leave. Humble as I am, I undertake to procure for you a decent maintenance, and to ensure your safety. It behoves every man to unfold if possible an atrocious mystery of this kind, and you more than all others, having been the instrument employed. It is a reparation you owe to society. I would willingly abstain from another argument. I know it is ungenerous to allude to favours bestowed; but on this singular occasion permit me to remind you of the debt of gratitude

titude you owe to me. Pay this debt. Bind me to your interests for ever. Confer a favour on me. Absolve me from my promise, and suffer me to keep these letters."

"As to the matter of this, do you mind me," replied the murderer, "I don't well understand what you be about, not I. I believe you are what they call a mighty good kind of gentleman, and all that; and only I am not in the habit of liking people, I should perhaps approve of you hugely; but you are somehow softish, I observe, with submission, and I must thank you for my letters, and to hold your tongue if you please, as you promised. If you was to go for to talk about this, it would be after bringing an old house about my ears, and therefore I must wish you good night."

He

He folded up his letters and was going. —"There is one question I would ask you," said Theodore, "before you go. Has your employer communicated to you any mode by which you may convey information to him?"—"Convey information to him? aye, that he has. The second letter I ever got from him told me how I was to send any message to him I might have to communicate, and, sure enough, it is a comical method. You have heard of the *Place de Sable*, Sir?"—"That deserted place among the marshes. I know it."—"It is commanded by all the back windows in the market-place, you know, perhaps."—"It is."—"Well, Sir, when I have any thing to say, I go to the *Place de Sable*, where being knee deep in mud, I am sure to meet nobody. With a long white pole in each hand, and standing on a spot described

scribed to me, I give my message by certain signals pointed out in a letter of instructions I received for that purpose. I am sure that, provided I do this on Sunday, at twelve o'clock, my employer is looking at me—reading me, I might say. But as there are a thousand windows, through any one of which he may look, and a thousand hills about, on any one of which he may be placed, it is impossible to guess where he actually is. Besides, when I have any thing to communicate, I must, the night before, shoot three rockets from my house; one at ten, one at eleven, and one at twelve o'clock."—"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Theodore, sinking into a chair, "such a contrivance!"—"Good night, Sir," said the ruffian abruptly, who now retired as fast as his wound and its attendant pain and weakness

ness would permit him, and shut the door.

Merciful Heaven! repeated Theodore, what superlative and unprecedented art! What horrible villainy! But am I, who, under all circumstances, have been the champion of innocence, and the assertor of virtue, to be initiated involuntarily into the black and hellish mysteries of guilt and treachery? Am I to learn a dark and dangerous transaction, and keep it secret? Am I to become the confidant of an assassin? Am I to know a conspiracy which threatens the happiness and security of society, and not reveal it? Shall I not become in the estimation of the virtuous, a conspirator myself? Shall I not, by a mistaken discretion, save the guilty and expose the innocent to destruction? Alas! such is my situation, that to perform a problematical

problematical duty, I should be guilty of a positive crime. Can I tell what I have heard this night without becoming the accuser of that assassin? and can I accuse him without exposing him to publick execution? To death? But who has a right to rob any man of life? What society, however numerous, has authority to do so? Every wretch that expiates his crimes at the tree or on the wheel, is in my opinion a victim to cruelty and prejudice. Human life is inviolable. The abstract reasoning of philosophy demonstrates this to the enlightened mind, and the practical experience of publick justice proves it to the ignorant. Not only has society no right to take away the life of any of its members, but it is even guilty of impolicy, not to speak of barbarity, in attempting it.

Oh Beccaria, Beccaria! when will thy mild

mild and admirable system be understood by the besotted multitude? When will thy enlightened book be read by the rulers of the earth? Gaspar shall never be accused by me. Mercy prohibits it. But for the sanguinary laws of this country, I might have stepped forward between him and his victims, but here in France it must not be. Gaspar, I will keep my promise. Not a word of this transaction shall issue from these lips, or be written by these fingers. With respect to myself, and to ensure my own preservation, what must I resolve? I am in danger of ruin and assassination. I am detested by a monster, who hesitates to perpetrate no crime however atrocious, and whose interest it now is to murder me. Be it so. Shall I for this sacrifice my independence, my peace of mind? Shall virtue and innocence for ever

ever yield to vice and violence? Forbid it magnanimity, forbid it Heaven! I will live as usual, walk out as usual, and trust to Providence and this arm for my preservation. So saying and so thinking, the proud and virtuous Theodore went to bed and slept till morning, and no sentiments of anger or of fear disturbed his repose.

At one the next day the Count Egfryd waited on him, and invited him to the *Chateau de St. Uldrich* in so polite and kind a manner, that he knew not how to refuse. Unknown to him, or in spite of him, a wish to be near Miss Bolton predominated in his breast, and he accepted the invitation.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

———Usciro in un gran prato; e quello
Avea nel mezzo un grande, e ricco ostello.
. . . . . .

Mais, ô Dieux! qu' est-ce que je vois?
Que de prodiges à la fois!
Quelle merveilleuse structure!
Je me trompe, ou l'art envieux
Semble vouloir en ces beaux lieux
Le disputer à la nature.
N' est-ce point un enchantement?
Qui m'impose agréablement?
. . . . . .

How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity!

The territory of *St. Uldrich* lay in the province of Guienne. It was an estate belonging to Count Egfryd, and had been possessed by his ancestors for many centuries. This estate had, with a nobleness of design which has never been exceeded, and a magnificence of execution which has

has seldom been equalled, been converted by its present proprietor into one beautiful immense demain.

At some distance from the *chateau*, but concealed from it by a thick plantation of chesnut trees, was a Dorick temple. It was intended for study, and it contained an extensive library. Its architecture was chaste and classical. The acclivity on which it stood was adorned with the choicest productions of the forest, which were disposed in appropriate combination and with peculiar taste. Beyond this, in a valley, was a grove of cypress; in the midst whereof, in all the solemnity of shade and silence, was a remnant of antiquity, for ages distinguished by the name of the Monument. This monument, the remains of a simple chapel, was contained within the enclosure of an old and ruined

cemetery,

cemetery, in which the humbled observer was struck with awe and astonishment at the view of an immense pile of human bones, the accumulated spoil of ages, and the awful reproach of worldly vanity. The monument contained a mutilated inscription, by which it appeared that it had been erected to preserve the memory of the *Sire Urien d'Egfryd,* who died in 1249. The last three lines were still legible. They were in barbarous French, and they ran thus:

" Preez pur li en bon manere,
Ke Jesu pur sa paisun
De pheeez li done pardun."

The meaning of which was, that the passenger should pray earnestly that Jesus, on account of his passion, might pardon the sins of the deceased.

The demain was, throughout, replete with picturesque effect, and admirably and most

most judiciously adapted to the Gothick architecture of the *chateau* that it surrounded, and the inartificial grandeur of the circumjacent districts.

Here was no *edginess of bank*, no *whiteness of water* unrelieved by trees, no insipid straightness of walk, no tasteless regularity of disposition. Here were no mechanical clumps, no velvet slopes, no mathematical quincunx; but on every side nature in her most beautiful attire. Here the gardener and the florist had exhausted their industry and their invention. In one place the fairy scenes of juvenile and innocent delight, in another the wild and fantastic pictures of Arabian romance; here the peaceful occupations of simple swains, and there the terrifick and alarming appearances of tremendous precipices and impetuous cataracts, alternally enchanted and

and astonished, delighted and confounded the senses and the imagination.

Water was sometimes heard to pour its rapid waves in passages under ground, and at other times a gentle stream, within flowery borders, was seen to flow in silver currents with a thousand little circuits through diversified and delicious meadows.

A hermitage not encumbered nor perplexed by false ornaments, the collection of which would appear artificial, though each might be natural, such as diciplines, sculls, beads, and hour-glasses, invited the romantick rambler with its severe yet captivating simplicity, to renounce the tumult of a treacherous world, and to taste happiness, unadulterated by no excess, and distributed by no intrusion, within its peaceful recess.

In another quarter, along the craggy edge

edge of a rocky mountain, inhabited by goats and deer, a rude paling had been erected to prevent the unwary peasant from tumbling down the precipice. Between this edge and a neighbouring cliff, a long and narrow rustick bridge, of one arch, offered to the terrified beholder a passage frightfully high and alarmingly slight. Under the bridge a torrent rushed with irresistible violence, and on the top of the cliff a grotesque cottage had been constructed, which seemed to totter on the verge of destruction. Nor were there wanted to complete the scenick beauty of a landscape so varied, the rich and magnificent effects of statues, fountains, marble basons, and balustrades; together with *jets d'eau*, a large collection of exotick plants and animals, blocks of ancient ruins, and various remains of sculpture.

The *chateau* itself had been built by Albert d'Egfryd, a native of St. Maurice in Switzerland, and an ancestor of the present *Conte*. The prospects from it were grand and extensive. There was much of wildness, and a little of rudeness in some of the views. There were tracts of naked rock. There were abrupt hills, and there were uncultivated heaths. But there was likewise much wood, much water, and an infinite diversity of surface.

The waters of the Garonne were to be seen at a distance, apparently motionless. Boats of pleasure and vessels of trade floated on its surface. Villas and plantations adorned its banks, and into its silver bosom the humble Dordogne might be observed to pour without cessation its tributary stream. On another side the city of Bourdeaux

deaux and the sea of Gascony were discernible. Distant mountains closed the scene.

The *chateau* had been built according to the principles which distinguish what is often called the latter Gothick, an order of building that even the partisans of Greek simplicity must think well adapted to the picturesque scenery, and mountainous wildness of the surrounding country. This, whether well or ill-founded, was the opinion of the present Count d'Egfryd, who thought that the various sculptures indicative of ancient superstition, which were dispersed through the several parts of the edifice, and the innumerable relicks of feudal independence, and the trophies of victory, both in the field and chace, which his ancestors had honourably obtained, and which were profusely scattered through the apartments,

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were, if not ornamental, at least allowable. The mind was, unavoidably, led to associate with them atchievements of chivalry, feats of courage, habits of virtue, and the observance of religious duties. Nor did he apprehend a charge of an application of false ornament, in combining with the antique and arabesque decorations of ruder times, what Grecian elegance has taught us in the fine arts, what modern science can supply to increase and heighten our comforts, and what Parisian luxury has devised to please the eye, indulge the touch, or promote voluptuousness.

After passing through an ancient archway, the remains of a fortified watch-tower, and in which might still be perceived the loop-holes, out of which the besieged shot their weapons, and the apertures, known in architecture by the term machicolations,

through

through which they poured boiling water and scalding pitch on the besiegers, a long, broad and winding, avenue appeared. This avenue conducted through a thick wood of lofty trees to the front of the *chateau*, which was in an extensive and rocky plain, though partly concealed from the view of those approaching, by several widely-spreading oaks, that had now resisted the rage of three hundred winters.

The front, still retaining a few specimens of barbarous fortification, and presenting to the view numerous ornaments of Runick invention, was grand, and perhaps sublime. Huge balusters, an embattled top, with deep mouldings, grotesque vases on the pilasters, some pinnacles nobly emerging, straight parapets, and cupolas much resembling Ottoman minarets, all tended to give it the appear-

ance of extreme age, massy strength and venerable solemnity. A whimsical but not unpleasing application of some politer decorations, such as Roman eagles, Persian statues, and cariatides, which appeared in several parts of the structure, served at once to gratify the eye and amuse the mind.

The *chateau* was built of a reddish freestone, which contributed no small portion of romance to its character; and it was of a height to excite wonder, if not to injure proportion. A noble flight of white marble steps conducted to the principal door of this baronial palace, and under the *fronton* was the motto, not less haughty than independent, "*Selon mon vouloir et franc arbitre,*" in golden and Gothick characters. The door, which was twelve feet in height, and proportionably broad, was placed

placed in a magnificent porch, that gradually diminished as it receded, and of which the sides were adorned with slender columns, (of exquisite delicacy and admirable workmanship) forming various arches over head.

The porch led to the grand hall, which was lofty and spacious even to grandeur, and of which the windows were formed of stained glass of every colour, producing an inexpressibly rich effect. The clusters of little shafts, and the intervening mouldings, not less regular than complicated, that supported the glass, gave to the whole an appearance of peculiar lightness and elegance.

Around the hall, the floor of which was one superb mosaick, and of which the furniture was composed of cedar and crimson velvet, there was a number of slender columns surmounted by arches, filled up

from the spring to the summit with beautiful tracery work. In the windows the stained glass presented several pictures chiefly chosen from the Pentateuch. In one place was seen Moses in the rushes, saved by Pharaoh's daughter. In another the murder of Abel; and in a third place the attempted seduction of Joseph by Potiphar's wife. There were some subjects of these paintings founded on the traditions of the Swiss. Among the rest was the famous story of William Tell, and a delineation of the victory gained in 1315 at Morgarton, over Leopold, Archduke of Austria, by the inhabitants of the three forest towns, headed by Hugo, surnamed the Haughty, the first Count of the house of Egfryd.

Here Hugo appeared, compared with those about him, of gigantick size, mounted on a fiery charger, and with his two-handed

handed sabre cutting off the head of Rupert of Gascoigne Hugo's horse was completely enclosed with steel armour, which protected even his ears. Thousands of plates seemed rivetted together to form the impenetrable covering.

Hugo himself carried an iron helmet surmounted by a plume of black feathers. His equipment was complete. At his left were a javelin and battle-axe, and at his right a hatchet and a lance. These were so artificially disposed, that neither his nor his horse's movements seemed in the least degree impeded by them. His legs and feet were defended by greaves, his face by a beaver, his thighs by cuisses, his hands by gauntlets, his arms by brassets, his back by a *guard due reine,* and his breast by a gorget, and over all these he wore a surcoat of cloth of gold, embroidered with armo-

rial bearings. From the front of his saddle was suspended that sort of shield termed a *rondache,* and to his greaves were attached enamelled spurs, the rowels of which were several inches in diameter, and formed of large spikes. Rupert, whose head he was cutting off, was equipped with a *haubergeon* or shirt of mail, which, though steel, availed not against the mighty force of Hugo's arm.

These pictures could not be touched; approach to them was denied by the height of the windows, and therefore, minute criticism being impossible, it was probable that they appeared to have more merit than perhaps they really possessed. Be this as it might, their effect was striking in the extreme.

The sides of the hall, and the columns that surrounded it, were adorned with sculptures,

tures, in the Saracenick style, of various military engines: and here might be seen, in marble, every kind of armour and every instrument of war, known to our ancestors, and, among the rest, in proper arrangement, and copied with infinite exactness, the ancient war-chariot, armed with hooks and sithes, mangonels, tripgets, and war-wolves, all engines for throwing stones, scaling-ladders, moving castles, and battering boats. Here likewise were to be seen bows, slings, standards, casques, spears, pikes and targets; and with these were interspersed, in capacious disorder, some grotesque figures playing on different instruments of music.

The fire-place in this great hall was an immense hearth, on which nothing but wood was burned, and round which the inhabitants of the *chateau* frequently sat in

winter. It was decorated with a variety of sculptures, and several pieces of mosaick, representing the tools of masonry known in the fourteenth century, and the sacred implements used in the Romish church. Here were trowels, hammers, rules and plummets; and here were likewise fonts, bells, sprinklers, mitres, canopies and organs. Over the fire-place was a painting on copper of an immense size, by the celebrated *Francesco Albano*, of a prospect in Switzerland. In this painting the master had, with admirable skill, introduced nearly all the scenery of the *Pays de Vaud*, from the Lake of Geneva to those of *Yverdun* and *Morat*. Mont-Jura, which separates it from *Franche-Comté*, was to be seen at a distance, and even a portion of the desolate and sterile *Le Chablais* was introduced, to contrast with the rich plantations

and

and exuberant vegetation of the foreground. To match this picture, one of equal size, at the opposite side of the hall, represented the grand tournament held by Philip the August on the pains of Picardy.

The hall that I have been describing, was lighted at night by sundry lamps, held in the hands of bronze statues, and it led to a noble banquetting-room, the windows of which were lancet-shaped, and of which the floor was a *chef d'œuvre* of art. It was a mosaick pavement of a square shape, with a deep border of the richest pattern. Mouldings of different colours surrounded the border, within which was described a purple circle. In the four angles formed between the circle and the border, were represented a ship, a horse, an eagle, and a stag. Within the circle was a represen-

tation of Attila, king of the Huns, attended by Walamir the Ostrogoth, and an army of Scythians, consecrating the sword of Mars. Pagan superstition had given a divine origin to this famous sword, which was here seen on the top of an immense altar, or rather pile of faggots, round which the blood of numberless victims taken in battle, formed a broad and dismal current.

The sides and columns of the banquetting-room, which was furnished in blue and gold, were still more superbly ornamented with sculpture than those of the hall. Its roof was composed of the segments of six several spheres, the whole forming a steady support to the superstructure.

On each of these segments was painted a chosen classical piece. On one was represented the story of Vertumnus and Pomona,

mona, with four boys playing around them, being allegorical representations of the seasons. On another were the three Graces sacrificing to Hymen, and Cupids presenting different emblems of love. On the third was Venus introducing Helen to Paris, and around them were various symbols of joy, happiness, and constancy. On the fourth was Andromache, attended by the Trojan matrons, invoking Minerva for the safety of Troy. On the fifth was Medea delivering the soporiferous herbs to Jason, by means of which he was to overcome the Dragon, with allegorical representations of Fame, Victory, Peace and Plenty. And on the sixth were Minerva and Apollo entreating Jupiter to send back Justice to the world, that she might restore the golden age, and Jupiter's refusal.

It was scarcely possible to resist the sentiments of enthusiasm that this banquetting-room excited. Recollections of chivalry and romance were inseparably associated with it. Here, thought Julia as she entered it, have knights and ladies often assembled. Here the young warrior, cased in steel, and vowing eternal fidelity, knelt to his mistress, who, placing a ribbon or a bracelet round his neck, bade him acquire glory and deserve her. How often, said she, have these walls resounded with the haughty tones of independent barons! How often have they echoed the amorous and the heroick strains of feudal minstrelsy! How often reverberated the direful clangor of opposing arms!

Between the hall and the banquetting-room was the grand staircase, on which no less art had been bestowed than was conspicuous

spicuous in the rest of the building. The oak that had been employed in its construction was now almost black with age. Every other part of the *chateau* was in an equal style of splendour, and beautified with ornaments, in nowise inferiour to those that have been described.

The chapel, which lay in a retired part of the building, was, like most other Gothick places of worship, formed in imitation of a grove of trees. In this intention the architect had perfectly succeeded. Its floor was a tessellated pavement of black and violet-coloured marble. Over the altar was a monumental shrine, enriched with a multiplicity of delicate decorations, and a prodigality of florid spire-work. The choir, the screen behind the altar, the oratory, the episcopal throne and the tabernacle,

tabernacle, were in the same laboured and complicated style. The canopy of the last was of massy silver.

The great eastern and western windows spread their marble ramifications in profuse variety, and were embellished with pictures of St. Jude with a club, St. James the Less with a fuller's pole, St. Simon with a saw, St. Paul with a sword, St. Thomas with a lance; and various subjects from the Apocalypse.

To produce the illusion of a grove, the columns of the chapel (that were thickly planted along the nave and aisles), though small, were split into delicate clusters of slight marble rods, which rising in pointed arches, twined, and doubled, and convolved, with endless intricacy and apparent fragility; and at length terminating among spindling

spindling pinnacles and innumerable branches, were finally lost in the nice lace-work of the lofty and variegated roof.

About the centre of the chapel were some larger columns, having ribs and bosses on their sides, and faced with a circular series of zig-zag indentations. Round the smaller ones a spiral groove passed from the bottom to the top, while a delicate net seemed to overspread the whole.

The sides of the chapel were adorned with what architects term the embattled frette, with various escutcheons of arms, with foliage and animals, and here and there with a *mezzo-relievo* of some devout ceremony. The little light that entered was coloured by the stained glass through which it passed, and a sacred and mysterious gloom hung on every object within this consecrated place.

The

The whole was regular, beautiful and solemn, and never, perhaps, since the days of Druid devotion, was there a spot better calculated for the offices of religiòn, which more happily accorded with sentiments of piety, or which more powerfully excited holy awe and enthusiastick veneration. The *chateau*, in all its other parts, was abundantly extensive, perfectly commodious, minutely elegant, and eminently grand.

As when a prince described in some fairy tale, after wandering for many days in quest of adventures, through sterile and uninhabited tracts, discovers, on a sudden, a magnificent palace and delicious gardens, created for his gratification by the magick power of his tutelary necromancer; so with little less surprise, and with nearly as much pleasure, our travellers first viewed the

the *chateau* and its demain. They felt an indescribable emotion of wonder, admiration and delight; to which, in the mind of the innocent Julia, was added a mingled feeling of enthusiasm and tenderness, for Julia was young, pious and sentimental.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

La tendre hypocrisie aux yeux pleins de douceur:
Le ciel est dans ses yeux, l'enfer est dans son cœur.

.....

A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind,
A lover's ears will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopt.
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails.
And when love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes Heaven drowsy with the harmony.

.....

Benedetto sia 'l giorno, e'l mese, e'l anno,
E la stagione, e'l tempo, e'l ora, e'l punto,
E'l bel paese, e'l loco, ov' io fui giunto
Da duo begli occhi, che legato m' hanno.

E benedetto il primo dolce affanno,
Ch' i' ebbi ad esser con Amor congiunto;
E'l arco, e le saette, ond' i' fui punto;
E le piaghe, ch' infin' al cor mi vanno.

I FEAR I have been tedious in the foregoing descriptions, but I live retired from the world, and know little of the publick taste. Judging of others feeling by my own, I have

have indulged in a minuteness, which, were I younger, I should not probably have hazarded. Old age is prone to verbosity; but let me not be charged with a wish to enlarge my history by useless digression. In this respect I shall never err intentionally. My book, without any extraneous matter, will be, perhaps, too bulky to be terminated by me; "My soul," in the words of the Scripture, "draweth nigh to the grave." The finger of death beckons to me, and the awful summons must be obeyed; but if allowed to breathe for a few months longer, I shall, I hope, be able to complete my task. I have now lived threescore years and twelve. Ah! within this period what vicissitudes have I not experienced, what pains have I not felt, what sorrows borne, what miseries endured! And how few have been my pleasures, how

short

short my comforts! The retrospect presents a black and melancholy picture of hopes disappointed, misfortunes unmerited, kindness ill requited, and labours unrewarded. And shall I now be accused of that meanest of offences—book-making? At the base thought my ancient blood pours in rapid currents to these furrowed cheeks, and my feeble limbs tremble with indignant agitation. No, I write from a principle of duty, from a feeling of justice, and from a hope of being useful. Never, never could I lend my name or my pen to cheat or to deceive society, under the promise of amusement or instruction.

It may be necessary to explain the motives that induced the Count to invite Theodore to the *chateau*. It seems Mr. Bolton had benevolently projected a plan for the author's advancement in life, which,

which, to be carried into effect, required an interview with him. The plan was to take Theodore with him to England, where his appearance, joined to Mr. Bolton's expostulations, might soften, if not remove the resentment of the grandfather, General Dalbert. In order to prevent any objection that pride, or a spirit of independence might start against accepting favours from a stranger, Mr. Dalbert was to be invited to finish the education of Julia, and to become her father's secretary at two hundred pounds a-year. On these terms it was hoped he would not object to enter into their family. So intent was the worthy man to execute this project, that he determined to revisit Bourdeaux on the fourth day after his departure from it. There was no possibility of diverting him from his purpose, nor of frustrating it. Mr. Bolton must

see Theodore, and Julia must accompany her father.

Their crafty host, sensible of this, and apprehensive lest some accident might delay their return to the *chateau*, undertook, with apparent good humour, to effect the desired meeting, without rendering a departure from St. Uldrich necessary. What was more easy? It was only to bring Theodore thither, which, the Count protested, nothing but forgetfulness had prevented him from attempting before. To this he added, with seriousness and an air of self-conviction, that a man endowed with more estimable qualities than *Monsieur* Dalbert he had never known. Some other expressions of kindness and esteem followed, that left not a doubt on the minds of his auditors of his regard for their favourite.

The

The Count had met Theodore at Mr. Bolton's in Bourdeaux, and had with a jealous eye observed Julia's partiality to him. In Egfryd's malignant heart this were sufficient to excite animosity; but another and more irritating motive existed, one that touched him in the tenderest point; one that wounded both his weakness and his pride.

This was a severe *critique* written and published by Mr. Dalbert, on a collection of the Count's poems that had appeared anonymously. The *critique*, though just, possessed little mercy. It convicted the author of temerity and phlegm, and proved him to be utterly destitute of poetical genius. Theodore, who wrote for subsistence, neither inquired nor cared whose work he reviewed, and by writing what he knew to be true, he hoped that he had vio-

lated no duty. But the Count, feeling all the rage of an unsuccessful and insulted author, vowed vengeance against the critick, and had actually identified Dalbert as his castigator when he met him at Mr. Bolton's.

Hating him with more than ordinary rancour, he had treated him with more than ordinary attention, and Theodore, won by the manner, and flattered by the kindness of the treacherous Egfryd, lamented the *critique* as the most unfortunate act of his life, secretly hoped he was not suspected to be the author of it, and solemnly resolved never to write another.

The failure of the attempt to assassinate had now aggravated the hatred of the Count to a degree nothing short of abomination. What! was he the employer

of

of those assassins? Ah! who but he could have planned, with such precaution and ingenuity, so iniquitous a scheme? He it was who employed Conrad and Gaspar as the blind and wicked instruments of his hatred and his revenge. Cruel and perfidious man! never before did human depravity wield an engine so efficient or so atrocious as this of thy invention.

He had not yet determined what method he should next adopt to continue his murderous hostility. He therefore wished to have Theodore at the *chateau,* lest the late event should act on his prudence or his timidity in such a manner, as to cause him to remove himself far from Bourdeaux. The miscreant, moreover, desired to learn from him the particulars of Conrad's death, as no communication was to be made by

Gaspar for some days. For all these reasons the Count invited Theodore to the *chateau,* as has been mentioned.

During their ride he artfully turned the conversation on duelling, and the modes of gratifying revenge practised in different countries. This necessarily introduced the subject of assassination. Theodore declared that any act of this kind was cowardly and villainous in the extreme, but the other exhausted the epithets of reprobation to express his horrour of the practice. He then, with a seemingly unintentional transition, mentioned the circumstance of a body having been found mortally wounded in the city. He described the wound, and the man, and the place where he had been found, and with a glance saw enough to convince him of the

the hand that had directed the blow; but with all his art he could not satisfy his curiosity further.

He soon afterwards expatiated with earnestness and eloquence on the charms of Miss Bolton. By this he hoped to obtain from his artless and unsuspicious companion some unguarded declaration. He was not mistaken. The name of Julia called forth all the attention and awakened all the animation of Mr. Dalbert, who spoke of her with the softened tone, with the faltering accents, with the decisive admiration of vehement passion. Never was woman so fair, never creature so feminine as Julia. His looks betrayed the feeling, his language the exaggeration of love. "These," said he, "are the sentiments of my reason. I speak of her in the coolness of my judgment. To her extraordi-

nary endowments, and not my partiality, is to be attributed the warmth of my language. Love for her I ought not and I do not feel."—"And why not?" interrupted the insidious Count. "What inequality exists between you but that of property? I hate and despise the narrow and selfish principle, which inculcates a respect for wealth. I say it without flattery, I think you, *Monsieur* Dalbert, in every respect qualified to deserve her."—"Ah!" uttered Theodore with a lengthened sigh, and the carriage stopped.

It would be curious to pursue the Count's reflections during this conversation. The honest unstudied words of his companion were doubtless in his sophisticated mind translated into the brutish language of the cold and sensual materialist. Every human action, every human sentiment,

sentiment, considered through the clouded prism of atheistical perversion, loses its brightness and its beauty, and presents only the indistinct and dusky outline of selfishness.

Mr. Bolton received Theodore with the affectionate cordiality of a parent, Julia saw him and blushed. He, suspicious of his own sentiments, and doubtful of his resolution, determined to assume a distance and coldness of manner towards her, which, when they now met, he practised for the first time. She, unconscious of the motives that operated on his mind, and hurt by what she considered marks of indifference, was silent and unhappy. She endeavoured to call to her recollection any thing she had said or done, that might have occasioned this change in the only man she had ever seen whose friendship

she desired. But her endeavours were vain. At times she would catch his eye fixed on her with an expression of earnest admiration, and on these occasions, inexperienced as she was, she felt and thought that she was not hated by him. This consciousness frequently tinged her cheek with an unbidden rose. At other times, when she spoke, so fixed and undivided was his attention, that he seemed as it were to suspend his respiration, lest even his breath should rob him of any portion of the sound. To reconcile these observations with his formality and reserve when he chanced to speak to her, and with his apparent unwillingness to speak to her at all, baffled the powers of her sagacity. Now she feared he disliked her; but this supposition, though afflicting while it continued, never disturbed her long.

Again

Again she hoped he loved her, and while this opinion predominated, she was the happiest of human beings.

Julia, innocent as she was susceptible, never for an instant entertained a suspicion that she was herself in love; and though she was sensible of lassitude and restlessness in the absence of Theodore, and of tranquillity and content in his presence, yet it never occurred to her to investigate the actual situation of her heart; nor, if she had, would she perhaps have ascertained the truth. But an accident occurred shortly after his arrival, which fixed the sentiments of each unalterably, and so strongly, that it was impossible for either to doubt any longer the existence of a mutual attachment.

He had entered the Dorick library, where, listless and absent, he sauntered

about, casting his eye over the maps and at the titles of the books, but it was an eye of vacancy. He was thinking of Julia. Suddenly a cry of distress reaches him. It is hers, and near to him. It proceeds from an open gallery close to where he stands. The eagle soaring over her nest, and seeing her callow young in danger, darts not with greater velocity for their defence, than Theodore now to preserve Miss Bolton. She had wished to read a book on an upper shelf, and one of the library ladders being already raised to it, she had mounted. She was employed in reading this book, as she stood on the ladder, when Theodore entered, but by some accident it had slipped and fallen, and she with it. She was frightened and stunned, but not hurt.

Theodore took her up. His countenance

nance expressed an undissembled and affectionate kindness of inquiry, and his action was dexterously rapid. There was no seat near them, and she was pale and speechless. He placed her at a window. He supported her agitated frame with one hand, with the other he took hold of hers. —"You are not much hurt, I hope?" said he softly and tremulously. "My God, how you tremble! Ah! be composed. But I feel no less alarm than yourself. Dearest Miss Bolton, let me have the pleasure of recalling your scattered spirits, of hearing from you that you are not injured."

Unconscious of what he did, he at the same time pressed her hand to his lips. A flame unknown to him before darted through his bosom. The tremour of timid love shook his frame. His dark intelli-

gent

gent eyes gazed with unutterable tenderness on her sylph-like form. Her face was overspread with a blush of the deepest red. Her heart beat impetuously; she tried to speak, but her accents, mild as the evening breath of infant zephyrs, expired in their own sweetness on her balmy lips. With a motion, compared with which the finger of a doting mother passed along the dimpled cheek of her sleeping infant is harsh and sudden, she attempted to withdraw her hand. A timorous and inquiring glance, not less quick than a sunbeam shot through the etherial void, informed her of the ardour and the perturbation that prevailed in the manly countenance which was still fixed on hers. Love and happiness, timidity and respect, gave to it a character that caught her imagination and touched her sensibility. Their

situation

situation was new to each, and interesting to both.

"Mr. Dalbert, pray," murmured she in a voice scarcely audible, and the attempt to remove her hand was renewed—"I—." He, urged by hope, led by passion, or influenced by fear at an action, the grace and delicacy of which were such, that to the coarseness of common feeling it would not have communicated the intention to remove her hand, threw himself on one knee. His was not common feeling: the touch of love is a mysterious conveyance of soul: the sphere of sensation improves as it expands from brute perception even to the confines of intellect: the grossness of the material root, of the physical centre, becomes gradually less base and more subtile, as the circle of refinement enlarges towards the empire of mind,

mind, until at length it volatilizes into absolute spirit and perfection. At this action, if action it may be called, that was rather the sensitive hesitation of a disordered temperament, Theodore, no longer master of his conduct, threw himself on one knee. —"Have I had the misfortune to offend you, adorable Julia?" said he. "You see before you the most enraptured, the most miserable of mortals. From that fatal moment when I first saw you, I have felt a passion till then a stranger to me. In vain I have since struggled to suppress a sentiment that I knew would embitter my existence, but each succeeding day has strengthened my attachment and confirmed my misery. Yes, loveliest of women, I confess, and I am proud to confess, that I feel for you a sentiment, more pure, more exalted, than any that man has hitherto ever known;

known; a sentiment of inextinguishable and unexampled love. Banish me from your presence. Kill me with a frown; but I must love you." His manner precluded the possibility of doubting his sincerity, and he again dared to press his lips upon her hand, and to squeeze it within his. At the same moment a tear of tenderness, distilled by the alchemy of love, from ardent and unsophisticated passion, dropped on it with a heat that penetrated to her soul, a moisture that softened her to the heart.

If she had been before disturbed, her agitation now became excessive. She had lately felt hesitation, she at this instant trembled with apprehension. By education and by habit led to the rigid that rejects, rather than the liberal that allows a slight personal familiarity, her prejudices all

all whispered to her to affect scorn or indignation, but her incipient attachment, her complexional sensibility, her artlessness and her inexperience, were antagonists too potent against prudery and pride, against the stupid formalities of ceremony, and the doubtful dictates of decorum, which with feeble effort struggled in her mind.—"Mr. Dalbert, it seems to me," said she with a graceful confusion, "that is, I—I think we are both very foolish. Will you permit me to consider whether or not I have been hurt? I am really so confounded with the ladder and you, that I hardly know what I am doing or saying."

Her blush which had, at first, overspread her whole countenance, and which was as much a confusion of the senses as a motion of the blood, was now confined to her cheeks. The blueness of her eyes

was

was less concealed by their jealous lids, and again she stood self-collected, smiling with the sweetness of youthful Hebe. Theodore had relinquished her hand and was about to answer, when the entrance of the *Abbé Le Flos*, the librarian, terminated their conversation.

CHAP. V.

———My conscience, sick,
No quiet knows. Crimes heap'd on crimes, present
A horrid group.

.....

E vede l' hoste, e tutta la famiglia,
E chi a finestre, e chi fuor ne la via,
Tenei levati al ciel gli occhi, e le ciglia,
Come l' Eclisse, ò la Cometa sia.

.....

Un carro apparecchiossi, ch' era ad uso
D' andar scortendo, per quei cieli intorno.

.....

E ch' aguzzar conviengli ambe le ciglia
S' indi la terra, e'l mar, ch' intorno spande,
Discerner vuol.

THE European, travelling, indolently secure, through Hindostan or Bengal, looking with delight at the spreading beauties of the rising sun, and inhaling the odorous freshness of an eastern morning, while a fierce and famished tiger, couched within a neighbouring thicket, glares a baleful look and prepares unseen to spring upon him,

him, is as little apprehensive of his fate, as Theodore was of the danger that now awaited him. A deep and deadly hate filled the breast of the hypocritical and ferocious Count. His thoughtless victim lay defenceless within his grasp. The poisoned bowl, the murderous stiletto, the thousand horrid shapes in which inventive violence can picture the ghastly image of death, passed in quick succession and perpetual recurrence through his cruel mind. But his was not ordinary revenge, and as much as he exceeded common villains in atrocity, so much the closer resemblance was his vengeance to assume to demoniacal malignity. To inflict death were mercy, to rack with corporeal suffering were lenient compared with the torture that was conceived in the hellish imagination

gination of the specious smiling Count Egfryd.

The powers of his mind great and comprehensive, the resources of his fortune princely and almost inexhaustible, his caution and his courage, his ingenuity and his craft, were all to be employed on this barbarous conception. He had suggested to his victim the possibility of an alliance with Miss Bolton, and he endeavoured, with unceasing and dexterous insinuation, not only to excite in his breast the passion of love, but to inspire him with the hope of a union with her. When this passion should be fixed, which it now was, and this hope encouraged into confidence, then was he to snatch the unsuspicious Theodore from all his joys, to place him in sad and solitary captivity, to taunt him with the degraded

degraded situation and criminal submission of the partner of his soul, to display the triumph of seduction in the debasement of the virtuous Julia, and to leave him in hopeless misery, the wretched inhabitant for life, and a protracted life, of a loathsome dungeon.

To effect this the Count already possessed such means as never before were had by man—such means as effectually barred the remotest possibility of detection—and such as, were the supernatural power of Satan his, could not be rendered more efficient.

The animosity of the Count towards Theodore was not such as malice or injury produces among the generality of mankind. It was a loathing, an antipathy, that rankled in his heart, inflamed his impatience, and gave to his mind the raging

and

and restless fever of the damned ; not unmixed, however, with ebullitions of diabolical joy as his projected vengeance ripened towards execution. He envied him for his success as an author. He dispised him for his poverty. He abhorred his virtues, and he dreaded the effect of his person and manners on Julia. To be criticised, to have the edifice of his literary labours dismantled and demolished, were cause enough for his inextinguishable hatred, but to this to add the intolerable presumption of becoming his rival and preventing his most poignant pleasure, was to incur the thunders of his utmost wrath. Denying and not believing the existence of his immortal soul; despising the blessed doctrine of a future state; he saw in death only the natural and necessary termination of animal functions, and in life

life he sought for nothing but what contributed to his personal gratification.

Utterly indifferent to him was the fate of all the rest of his species; their happiness gave him no satisfaction, their misery excited no commiseration, their death produced no concern, no remorse. Selfishness alone governed his conduct. To this might be ascribed all the actions of his life. He affected amiable manners, because the respect and affection of his acquaintances and relations were necessary to his happiness. He laboured in literary composition, because this was the basis on which he strove to erect the structure of his posthumous fame; and fame he sought, because his vanity was indulged by hoping that his name would be handed down to the latest posterity. He was led to intrigue

by irresistible temperament; but every object of his passion had been invariably destroyed by him. Their ruin seemed as necessary to his depravity, as their favours to his propensities.

The gratification of his revenge was with him a principle of inflexible severity. No injury, no slight, had he ever received, that he did not remember, and that he did not punish; no submission could soften, no contrition appease his vindictive temper; and even in the course of his soft and sedulous attentions to the unhappy victims of his lubricity, every mortification, every invective, every frown, delays, disappointments and oppositions, were all treasured in his deep and retentive memory, though he should smile with seeming inattention, or soothe with apparent humility, and

were

were all followed by an inevitable and dreadful retribution. He carried on a secret warfare against mankind. No moral tie bound him, no kindred relations influenced him; he lived for himself alone; but he knew that the open indulgence of his appetites was incompatible with the regulations of society, and that therefore it would not be allowed. For this reason he hated social order and all its members, for who could have a community of feeling or interest with him, with an atheist, a being who would have sacrificed half his fellowmen to ensure a pleasure or obtain security?

His opinions, his faith, his wishes, being all proscribed, he was necessarily a creature of imposture and mystery. He was virtually an outlaw, and every human being whom he saw, he considered as a minister of justice or a foe, whose duty or

whose interest it was to expose his machinations and to punish his misdeeds.

Alas! what is man! this unhappy being, from perverseness of constitution, from profligacy of habit, and from duplicity and fraud long practised, seemed to have entirely lost the character of our nature, and was a rare and horrible example of the effect of passions indulged, and depravity unrestrained.

To such an enormity of vice had his lust of pleasure, his indulgence in unsanctioned gratification, his detestation of moral restraint, all joined to an acute sensibility of shame, carried him, that he now no longer considered any woman worth the conquest, any object worth the fruition, where the one was not separated from him by propriety, law or honour, and the other inhibited by nature, justice or humanity.

His

His native pride, the stubbornness of his character, the freedom of his education, all revolted against restriction, all prompted to an infraction of commandment. The laws of God he derided, those of man he despised, and his turbulent disposition, his active mind, found employment and indulgence only in vitious, inhuman and abominable pursuits.

People of virtue, sons of benevolence, daughters of purity, respectable matrons, and constant husbands, frown not with disapprobation, look not with incredulity—such is the history of delinquency; and be assured that in the progress of criminal pursuits, a love of wickedness is invariably acquired, and that the concluding service of vitious repletion requires the horrible seasoning of impending infamy and danger. It is thus with needy villains, with

irresolute, and shallow, and silly reprobates; but what must be the accumulated horrours of moral perversity joined to consummate deceit, matchless intrepidity, superiour talent and untarnished reputation! Count Egfryd was in truth the most dangerous of mankind.

It may rank among the phenomena of ethick philosophy, that great mental endowments should be found conjoined with extreme flagitiousness, but I am a narrator of facts, and trouble myself little about the surprise or disbelief of others. Count Egfryd was such as I have described him. Though a married man, he indulged for Julia a passion, compared with which every other attachment he had felt before was weak and transient. He burned, he expired for her. He determined that she should fall, and that Theodore should perish;

perish; but the fate of the latter was delayed for a short time by a slight indisposition which confined him to his chamber: meanwhile, the innocence of the former was to be exposed to a new and dangerous experiment.

Plain people think only of simple means to effect their purposes. It is for the bold, and great, and wicked, to hazard extravagant enterprizes, and exhibit the resources of daring novelty. The Count above all other men possessed eccentricity of project, and fancifulness of speculation. They well agreed with the darkness of his character. Neither in his motives, his actions nor his ends, was he to be read; and in proportion as his plans were extraordinary and incredible, he considered them well laid. That which his active mind projected

against Miss Bolton will support this assertion.

In the whole circle of scientifick enterprize, there is no victory over ignorance and inertness so admirable or so curious as that of aeronautick navigation. It is an invention beyond the ordinary compass of the human intellect. The experiments of Montgolfier were at this period the subject of universal wonder and inquiry. The Count was among the first who improved upon the original idea by filling a silken globe, not with smoke, but with a gas as elastick as common air, yet considerably less heavy. The consequence of employing a globe so filled is, that being specifically lighter than the same bulk of the atmosphere which surrounds us, it rises in it until it arrives at that region where the air

air about it is nearly of the same degree of rarity with the gas. If the globe be made very large, it is clear that it will be able to lift to a great height a weight attached to it.

The Count's experiments proved a constant source of interest and amusement to the visitors at the *chateau.* He, always original, and always wicked, determined to convert his last improved balloon into an instrument for the seduction of Miss Bolton. However whimsical or absurd this may appear to the unsophisticated mind, such, nevertheless, was his intention. Herein he was prompted chiefly by the difficulty he experienced in finding opportunities to speak to her alone.

Besides this young lady, her father, and Mr. Dalbert, there was other company at St. Uldrich. The Marquise de Sagoné,

and her daughter; the Vicomte du Gressy; the Chevalier Le Paing; Madame la Baronne Monesier and her daughter, and the old Bishop of Autun. There were the Count's three unmarried sisters, Le Chevalier D'Arpens, the Abbé Le Flos, and four officers of the French dragoons from Bourdeaux. A more polished or agreeable society was nowhere to be found. Julia, to whom French manners were little known, and French gaiety was always welcome, entered into their amusements with unqualified delight. She insensibly caught the vivacity of her new associates, and was in a short time the very soul of their union. She projected parties of pleasure, and from every such party she banished, by the unaffected chearfulness of her temper, and the playful effusions of her wit, all possible approaches of languor or insipidity. She prattled

prattled in French with a foreign, graceful incorrectness, that charmed her auditors; and she often laughed herself at the blunders she committed.

The *Comtesse D'Egfryd*, like many other women of family in France, had never left the convent in which she had been educated, until her marriage. She was then eighteen, and in accepting the hand of the Count, she had been prompted not so much by partiality to him, as by her impatience of monastick restraint. It might be said that nature had intended her for a coquette, and no education could have rendered her either amiable or constant. A flow of spirits that seemed inexhaustible, and a love of pleasure that was not to be satiated, joined to readiness of wit and fluency of language, rendered her soon the chief favourite of the fashionable and

frivolous. Vanity appeared to be her chief foible, but intrigue was, in reality, her ruling passion, and intrigue alone employed all her serious moments.

At once volatile and ardent, her attachments were many and criminal; but she had art equal to her depravation, and she had sufficient address to conceal both. From the world she concealed them, but her husband was not to be deceived. He had read her disposition before their marriage, and her subsequent conduct, which confirmed his opinion of her, neither surprised nor disturbed him. He was indifferent to her person, and while she continued to occupy the station of a woman of distinction, and to preserve the character of a woman of fashion, he cared little if she forfeited the reputation of a woman of virtue.

She

She was small but well made, and she had the prettiest legs and feet in the world. Her face, though not handsome, was so playful and so intelligent, that without being able to discover a single beauty in it, every one was pleased with its expression. Her manners had little of that elegance which expresses dignity and grace, but they had much of that ease and propriety which an early and a continued association with the French *noblesse* always teaches. With all her chearfulness and all her pleasantry, the *Comtesse D'Egfryd* had never been loved. Her gallants had been men of the highest rank, whom her vanity had prompted her to enroll in her train, and who from complaisance, or mere *besoin d'agir*, had appeared about her for a season; or handsome vacant and dissipated men, whom she herself had dismissed in-

in a few weeks; but the Chevalier D'Arpens, the friend of her husband, was the only individual among all her admirers, who wished to be retained, and whom she wished to retain. He was almost as profligate as the Count, but he wanted his talents and his courage. He was neither so agreeable nor so dangerous. The Chevalier found in the *Comtesse* a mistress to his mind, and from pure indolence he dreaded the trouble of obtaining another. The *Comtesse* saw in the Chevalier a lover, less insipid than any of those she had dismissed, a lover whose attentions to her were pleasing, and whose personal and mental accomplishments were deserving of her admiration.

His age was thirty-five, his person was tall and graceful, and his face regular and handsome. The animation of his black

eyes contrasted strangely, but not unbecomingly, with a listlessness in his manner and a languor, that sometimes suggested to those who observed him the ideas of collapse and debility. He spoke but seldom, and he rarely let his eyes meet the looks of those with whom he conversed. He never laughed, and his smile was a grimace practised for the sake of fashion. His words were slow, and without appearing to be studied, were invariably arranged with logical correctness and laconick precision. He spoke just loud enough to be heard by every person with whom he happened to be in company, but no louder; apparently he dreaded the exertion of even uttering a breath unnecessarily. His voice was full and clear. His attitude was seldom varied. Stillness was his characteristick. In his looks, his motions, and his

his accents, the gentleman was unequivocally expressed, together with absolute tranquillity; and though silent and languid, he never appeared sullen, dull, or gloomy; and unknown to him was every species of affectation. He could be eloquent when he chose; his mind was enriched with varied and copious information; and more than one woman had thought him fascinating. But his propensities, like those of the Count, were vitious and perverse. His passions were violent; he was malignant; he was false; he was vindictive; and, like the Count, the indolent D'Arpens was an atheist.

Every hour increased Julia's intimacy with the Count, her respect for his talents, her admiration of his accomplishments, her regard for his seeming virtues. There was a charm in his tone and manners,

ners, an unstudied eloquence in his language, an unction in his address, a softness in his looks, that she could not resist, and which she yielded to with pleasure.

He, irritated at the difficulties that opposed all his attempts to obtain a *tête-à-tête* with her, had recourse, at length, as I have said, to the air-balloon.

The giddy *Mademoiselle De Sagoné*, and the intrepid *Mademoiselle Monesier* had, each of them, already ventured to ascend with him in it to a height of fifty feet. A strong rope that was fastened to it, prevented the possibility of its rising higher. They expatiated with habitual exaggeration, and affected raptures, on the pleasures they had experienced, the sweet sinking of the heart during the ascent, the enchanting prospect from the great height, and the voluptuous softness of the

airy

airy motion as they hung suspended. They even assumed some glory to themselves, for an achievement that marked the strength of their minds and the ardour of their curiosity. To other women they left the errours of an illiberal education, and the follies of unfounded fear. The gentlemen, on their part, were prodigal of their praises to the fair aeronauts.

At some moments of emulation, or whim, or volatility, it passed through Julia's brain that she would likewise go into the air-balloon, but the thought always brought with it a shuddering which she could not conquer.—"Ah, Sir!" said she to Mr. Bolton, "if I could but once have it to say that I had mounted in a balloon, how happy I should be!"—"My dearest girl, your ambition, I fear, is too soaring. Nature never intended you for situations

situations that require courage; and though there may be no danger here, yet there is something in an attempt of this kind that might terrify even a man."—"But, Sir," observed the Count, "might we not gratify Miss Bolton without the possibility of alarming her fears? The balloon can be brought as near to the ground as we please, and I can't see why she should not indulge herself, particularly as you would stand at the wheel-work which governs the rope, and would order it to be lengthened or shortened as she should direct."—"It's very true, Count, and if Julia wishes it I have no objection."—"My dear papa, let us go look at it; I will only stay in it an instant, and it shan't be higher than three or four feet from the ground. I wish poor Mr. Dalbert was well enough to look at me."

This

This last expression did not escape the Count. He heard it with a smile, but he treasured it in the black register of his mind.

The balloon was filled with gas, and the boat was only two feet from the ground, when Julia, with a pallid countenance and palpitating heart, stepped into it with the Count. In a few minutes she lost all her fears, and requested she might be allowed to rise a few feet. Her father consented. The happiness of his Julia was ever the first of his wishes. By degrees she rose to twenty feet, then to twenty-five, to thirty, to thirty-five, to forty, and even to fifty feet, which was as high as either of the other two young ladies had ventured to ascend. What a triumph was Julia's! What joy filled her little heart! She no longer had any apprehensions, she came down

down in safety, and it was agreed that she should ascend again, the next morning, before all the world.

The Count, during the remainder of the day, struggled to appear happy and contented. But his turbulent and vitious soul could not endure, much less enjoy, any scene of domestick felicity or virtuous repose. Julia was the divinity that he adored, but his adoration, as inconsistent as it was profane, tended only to her destruction. Her ruin was the object of his wishes, and the employment of his thoughts. His passion for her was equally criminal and uncontrollable. How different from that which animates the bosom of the virtuous lover, who, in all things, studies the happiness and the honour of his mistress? The peace and tranquillity of the gentle Julia were now in danger from a married man,

man, a wicked seducer, who, not more sensual than cruel, sought to subdue her honour and betray her repose, and who preferred the external and inferiour attractions of her person to the more exquisite perfections of her mind.

Ah! innocent and too lovely Julia, the justness of your taste, which induced you to cultivate his acquaintance into intimacy, the goodness of your heart, the candour and the purity of your mind, the sensitive delicacy of your manners, all are but feeble, all, perhaps, insufficient, to guard you from the corrupt designs of a monster, whose riches give him an almost unlimited command over every physical energy of man, and over each of the kingdoms of nature; whose knowledge of the sciences affords all the means possible to human genius to effect his purposes; whose

whose deep and comprehensive understanding contains a mine of invention; whose tumultuous passions are now concentered in one burning wish, that of triumphing over your virtue; who knows no fear of God or man; whose atheistical and atrocious principles prevent the possibility of remorse or hesitation; whose prudence never sleeps, whose arts are inscrutable, and whose character is deemed good and amiable. May the power that watches over unsuspecting innocence, and guards the chastity of your sex, shield you from the impending danger, and conduct your steps from the abyss which now threatens to devour you!

The Count had endeavoured, with sedulous concern, to render the *chateau* at this period the centre of all the refined and elegant pleasures. He lavished his riches

riches and strained his invention to procure attractions and create variety. There was nothing left for delicacy to seek, or voluptuousness to wish, nor was there any thing admitted which the most fastidious refinement could have rejected. Every sense was gratified with as much pleasure as it was capable of receiving, while the mind, excited by curiosity that was never allowed to slumber, was indulged and astonished with the most beautiful specimens of art, the noblest productions of genius, and the richest charms of nature.

But what appeared most worthy of his magnificence, and most strikingly characteristick of his grandeur and originality, was the air-balloon that I have mentioned. It had been constructed under his own directions. It was of immense size, and made entirely of silk. It was painted with the

the richest colours. A net of purple silk enclosed its summit, and from this net eight ropes of the same substance, and of buff colour, descended to the boat, to which they were fastened.

The boat was exceedingly beautiful. Its exteriour represented a shell of mother-of-pearl, with a broad spiral line of burnished gold. On the shell were represented the birth of Venus, the marriage of Thetis, the death of Ceyx, and the flight of Helen. Its edges were of the brightest azure, and the seat within it, being a circular sopha, and calculated to receive two persons, was furnished with cushions of lilac velvet. Its sides and bottom were covered with orange brocade, on which was embroidered, in silver, Ganymede's ascent from Mount Ida on an eagle, and the story of Prometheus stealing the fire

of Heaven. The gold spiral line terminated, at bottom, in a *bouquet*, composed of stained glass appearing to be real jewels, and at top, in a wreath of artificial flowers, which was divided into six parts by the same number of Cupids, each appearing to present to the aeronauts some of the different refreshments suitable to a voyage through the air.

A festoon of silver and yellow fringe hung from the edges of this airy vehicle, and the oars and rudder, which were intended to govern its motion, were constructed of the lightest materials, embellished in the highest style of ornament, and embroidered with butterflies and zephyrs. The swelling sides of the immense sphere itself were decorated with gold and crimson arabesques of the boldest design. From its summit arose a lofty

standard, spreading to the wind the armorial bearings of the house of Egfryd on white satin; and its bottom, which was thirty feet above the boat, was painted to represent the celestial mansions, the deities smiling with approbation, and appearing to open their heaven to receive the adventurers from below.

Nothing described by Pagan poets, nothing to be found in Arabian fiction, exceeds or equals the magnificence of this balloon. It pressed against the liquid bosom of nature with a rapidity, a force, a splendour, a sublimity, that baffled all the reasonings of experience, and exceeded all the calculations of probability.

The Count had acquired an admirable dexterity in its management, and was accompanied, the next day, by Julia according to their agreement. Their little flight

afforded a safe and rare entertainment. Mr. Bolton guarded the rope below, now ordering the balloon to be wheeled down, and again suffering it to rise. She, disturbed by no apprehensions, was delighted with the prospects her aerial trip afforded, and the emotions it excited. The beauty of the boat, the gentle undulation of its movement, the clearness of the air, the applauses of her friends below, the extent of the view above, the serenity of the sky, the convenience of her seat, in which no motion of the machine, however violent, could disturb her, but above all, the presence of the Count, his placid and dignified deportment, the graces of his conversation and the delicacy of his attentions, soothed her mind to tenderness, courted her attachment to the beautiful and the romantick, and even elevated her sentiments

sentiments of piety to enthusiasm. She felt resigned and delighted.

Her appearance this morning was uncommonly interesting. Her hair, of the finest flaxen, was negligently secured by a comb, and as she sat in the boat, her head and neck, that appeared above its sides, could have served as a model for the bust of Maia. Her dress was of pink sarsnet, her ornaments were of pearl, and while she slowly ascended from the ground, she might, not unaptly, be compared, for her innocence and her beauty, to one of the virgin saints, when called from this earth to the bosom of their Creator, to exchange terrestrial substance for etherial essence, and who, thus summoned to immortality, may be imagined to float with eager attitude and benign countenance,

through our grosser atmosphere, to the regions of celestial bliss.

Arrived to the utmost height that the rope, securing the balloon, would admit, the Count, by a simple contrivance which he had previously arranged, detached the boat from the rope that secured it. The screams of her father and of the other spectators informed Julia of her danger, who attributed to accident what was the result of premeditated fraud and desperate depravity. In an agony of terrour that beggars description, she perceived the balloon rising majestically to an elevation that made her shudder. The colour forsook her cheeks, the sight her eyes.

In vain the Count protested to her there was no danger, in vain he assured her that, by permitting the hydrogen to escape, they

they should descend gradually in a few minutes. In vain he displayed his activity in a seeming endeavour to liberate the gas, by pulling the string that opened the valve for its departure. They had already mounted to the highest regions of the atmosphere, when, turning her eyes towards the earth which she feared never more to tread, what was her consternation to see it at a depth that took distinctness from every object?

To be suspended by a few cords at such a frightful height: to have no support but a little frail boat, which a thousand accidents might precipitate: to find herself above the clouds in a machine of silk: it was too much for the delicacy of her frame and the weakness of her nerves. How many heroes would, in her situation, have trembled with terrour?—"My God!

my God!" cried she in a tone of anguish and with a look of despair, "save me, oh, save me!" She could articulate no more. Her agitated frame sunk lifeless into the arms of the Count, who soon succeeded in discharging as much gas as caused the balloon to descend into a warmer region. Here, with the assistance of salts and other stimulants, he quickly recovered her. The violence of her first emotion having abated, she was able to hearken to his assurances.

The tranquillity of his countenance and the firmness of his manner, tended in a considerable degree to diminish her terrour. He assured her, that, but for the pain her fright occasioned him, this aeronautick excursion would appear the most delightful and interesting adventure of his life. He conjured her to be composed, and, with a persuasive eloquence peculiar

to

to himself, proved, if not to her satisfaction at least to her conviction, that she had never taken an airing in a carriage more secure than the sublime voyage she was now making—" At my pleasure," said he, " I can rise or descend, and I only wait until we shall arrive over yonder plain, to anchor our little vessel, which I can do with perfect security and without any trouble. How charming to sail, as we do, through the air with extreme rapidity, and not to be sensible of the motion! How grand to float in silent majesty over the lofty habitations of the proud, which appear to our eyes, rendered philosophical by our elevation, as humble as the lowly cottages of the poor! How sublime to take in, at one view, mountains, rivers, plains and cities, and to have our horizon extended far beyond the visual reach of

all other mortals! How voluptuous to recline on velvet cushions in mid air, while we are warmed by a summer sun, and fanned by zephyrs of true etherial origin! Let me," continued he, "prevail on you to banish your apprehensions, believe me they are quite unfounded."

"Oh!" exclaimed she, "let us descend immediately! I am nearly dead with apprehension."—"You will observe," said he, "with what an easy motion we are approaching to the plain; in fifteen minutes we shall be on the ground. But I am really vexed to think that your unreasonable fears should deprive us of the most rational enjoyment in nature."—"You speak like a courageous man," replied she, dreading his contempt, "and make no allowance for female timidity: but, in truth, I believe you are right. I

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am sure we are safe, and you may, if you please, descend more slowly. I have that reliance on your skill that I am persuaded there is no danger, but—"—"With your permission, then," said he, "I will descend less rapidly; and be assured that if I did not know a little delay would contribute to your gratification, which I prize above all other considerations, I should not presume to indulge myself by delaying our debarkation for an instant." As he uttered these words, he took one of her hands in his, and, gently pressing it, he looked at her with tenderness. A blush of modesty immediately suffused her expressive countenance.

His words, his looks, and the pleasure that she always felt when sitting near him, joined to the intellectual luxury which her situation actually afforded, and on which he had eloquently expatiated, tend-

ed in a great degree to compose her mind, and to enable her to speak with collected thoughts of the accident that had occurred. Such was her confidence in the judgment and activity of the Count, and such her dread of being despised by him, that she forced herself to appear pleased with her situation, and it was not long till she thought of the circumstance which had given her to the sky, without much terrour, and looked forward to the moment that was to restore her to the earth, without much impatience.

The stillness of the air increased every moment, but still a gentle current wafted them, almost imperceptibly, towards the Garonne—"Now," said the Count, "we have an opportunity of visiting that romantick little island in the river, which you have heard so often described as the sweetest

sweetest spot in France. If you permit me, I will navigate you to the very centre of it, and as there are innumerable boats traversing the water this fine day, we can suffer no distress for an opportunity of returning. I undertake to supply you with a collation on the island, and we shall be able, with ease, to revisit the *chateau* before supper. This will add infinitely to the *éclat* of your voyage, and will prove that if, at first, you had any fears, you possessed good sense enough to conquer them. I recommend this to you," continued he, "in the full persuasion that it can be effected with perfect security; and, I assure you, upon my honour, that you cannot possibly oblige me more than by giving your assent."

If there were no other motive, this last assurance of the Count would, alone, have been

been sufficient to induce her to acquiesce. Accordingly it was determined that they should steer for the island. The wind was favourable, and with the assistance of the oars which the Count made use of, and the rudder which Julia by his instructions governed, they proceeded in a direct and gentle course towards the place of their destination.

The strangeness of her situation, the hurry of her thoughts, and her exertions to appear composed, had deprived Miss Bolton in a great measure of the faculty of reflection. Nevertheless she regretted her entrance into the balloon more than any other act of her life, and she thought of her father's distress with a feeling of agony; but such was her facility of disposition, such her fear of disobliging, such the gentle pliability of her manners, and such

such her desire to bestow contentment, that she could not summon courage enough to insist on an instantaneous descent. Besides, her curiosity and her ambition were both artfully played upon by her insidious enemy.

Every moment she appeared more reconciled to her situation, yet still she spoke of the uneasiness which her father would feel during her absence, with concern and alarm; but her companion ridiculed her distress with so much volubility and so much wit, that she was, at length, forced to admit that Mr. Bolton's meeting her at night unhurt, would more than compensate for any anxiety he might suffer until then.

The current of air that had lately wafted them with gentle motion towards the river

river had now subsided. A youthful writer would say, that the aerial deities seemed to have produced a universal calm, as if anxious to retain an invention that did honour to their empire, and desirous to prolong the stay of their two illustrious visitors by a perfect and heavenly repose: and, perhaps, he would add that the zephyrs, forbid to play upon the bosom and cheeks of the lovely Julia, now slumbered among these charms. She, with a mind now harmonized to the magnificence of the scene, expected with calm submission the moment when the Count should propose to her their descent. Relinquishing his silken oars, and looking with an air of entreaty at his amiable friend, he asked her, and smiled as he spoke, if they should take their collation where they were?

were? She nodded a doubtful, hesitating assent; when, with the rapidity of magick —but here I must pause.

Can I, without repugnance, submit to the painful necessity of describing what my reason contemns, what my integrity detests? Alas! it is my peculiar lot to find my duty and my principles irreconcileably opposed. Who, with more impatience, abhors a deed of darkness than I? Who, with less pleasure, relates a tale of surprise or an incident of puerility? But I must follow the dark obliquities of this monster. I have sworn to paint his infamy in the colours of truth, and I will perform my task. Whether he tries to delude with frivolity or frolick, or to soar beyond suspicion in the flights of romance, I will pursue his wanderings, and detect his machinations. The display of his little

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and laborious arts, which now follows, will serve as a memorable proof that apparent absurdity of detail, may, by the accomplished libertine, be employed at once to conceal and to promote extreme flagitiousness of design.

Having, as I have said, seduced Miss Bolton into a tacit approbation of an aerial repast, with the rapidity of magick a little table, not visible before, appeared. This table, made of tortoiseshell and ivory, and embellished with imitations of amethyst and topaz, was soon covered with delicious wines and sweetmeats from both the Indies, which with iced creams and lemonade, completed a collation, that from its richness and elegance, the small size, accurate proportion, and comprehensive variety of the service, the neatness of the ornaments, and the convenience and ingenuity

genuity of the distribution, might be thought worthy of fairy hospitality. In the meantime a dew of perfumed water (which was contained in a gilt receiver under the balloon, and which could be discharged by pulling a silken string within the boat) sunk in imperceptible drops about the vehicle, while a small organ, concealed beneath the circular sopha, played several of Julia's favourite airs, whose countenance expressed unutterable astonishment and admiration. She tried to eat, and the Count protested that all was much improved in flavour by the voyage to so pure a region. He even declared with vivacity that she looked like the goddess of Love, sipping nectar in the skyey mansions, and tasting the divine ambrosia.

The repast finished, he removed all that had

had composed it, except some hermitage and a jar of water—" It would be vain to deny," said he, after pressing her to take some wine, " that this aerial excursion of ours was premeditated on my part. I have ravished you from the earth, which is unworthy of you, to transport myself to heaven in your society. I confess myself guilty of a fraud, but it was a fraud dictated by a power that will be obeyed. You see before you a criminal, but a criminal that shall never again offend. If you think him not entirely unworthy of forgiveness, say so before we descend, which will be immediately, and you will make him the happiest of mortals; but if you hearken to your justice rather than your clemency, then, indeed, shall I be for ever miserable. Yes, fairest and most amiable of women, I confess myself the guiltiest of men, if it be

be a crime to adore you, and I appear before you the most miserable of wretches if you must condemn me. You know the sincerity, the honesty of my disposition, you know how long I have combated the most ungovernable of passions under the veil of friendship and respect, but you do not know the flames that for some time past have consumed me, the disorder that now preys upon my constitution. Day after day I pass in anxious solicitude, or in society still more intolerable. The bosom of darkness receives my sighs, my pillow is the depository of my tears." Here sighing and shedding a few tears upon the hand of Julia, which he at the same time offered to press to his lips, the dissimulating Count Egfryd appeared in an agony of conflicting passions.

Julia, at language so unexpected and so alarming,

alarming, stared with amazement. Her eyes, at once repellent and inquiring, were fixed upon him. Pride, surprise, and trepidation, deprived her for a moment of utterance. She had never before been insulted, she had never before wished to possess the language of reproach, or lamented her feebleness of invective. In her indignation she forgot the adventures of the morning, and even the existence of the balloon. She felt that her situation required decision. She withdrew her hand with instinctive promptitude, and in a tone of dignity and firmness forbade a repetition of the offence. She would have been eloquent, but her thoughts were too tumultuous and too rapid to be expressed with much order.

"Sir, Count Egfryd, is this your friendship? Is your attachment to my father to be

be shown by your contempt for me? Is your sincerity to be marked by treachery? Your kindness by outrage? You are a married man, the *Comtesse* is my friend, and I am alone; never did I give you cause to suspect my honour or my delicacy, and this, Sir, I must consider a base advantage of brutality over weakness. Politeness may condemn my words, but virtue abhors your action, and though I should even violate good-breeding, still will I assert your turpitude. My God! my God! is it possible you could intentionally have torn me from my father, in order to expose me to this affront! Sir, I hate your purpose, despise your means, and now loathe your presence; and——."

—"Miss Bolton, *Mademoiselle* Julia, your pardon for a moment. Be a little less warm. Do not increase our misunderstanding by unnecessary

unnecessary vehemence. It is true I am a married man. It is certain I love you. It is demonstrable that I have encountered trouble and peril to have an opportunity of telling you so. In all this am I to blame? If you are fair beyond the wishes of female vanity; if you are gentle, delicate and attractive, beyond the belief of all who do not know you; if a charm hangs on your lips and attends on your steps, that bewitches every ear and every eye; if a wondrous irresistible fascination encompasses you, and you alone, of all human beings, am I to blame? If I loved you, and were silent and mysterious, I should be pardoned. Loving you, as I do, with unparalleled impetuosity, and with unexampled sincerity, shall I be condemned? For what? For my honesty in declaring the real sentiments of my heart!

heart! Away with such injustice! You possess too much ingenuousness."—"Sir, I possess too much pride to listen any longer to such language. I insist on being instantly released from this terrible machine, and on your silence."

The Count, who clearly saw in her manner the annihilation of all his hopes, drew back his head slowly and contemptuously. His eyes, now almost closed, scarcely deigned to regard the object of his scorn. A half-suppressed yawn decided the haughtiness of his manner. The insolence of his nature, upon this occasion, overcame his systematick and artificial tranquillity.—"Why, Madam, I confess it is very fine, and very interesting, to act the vestal in this heroical strain, but, in truth, I am not accustomed to the harshness of your insular phraseology;

and you will excuse me if I do not perfectly understand it. You have a great deal still to learn, I fear, Miss Bolton, and there is one most important accomplishment you seem entirely unacquainted with, that of a graceful submission to inevitable necessity. I saw you an amiable but unpolished English girl. You differed materially from the other females of my acquaintance, and I determined to possess you. Don't frown—I determined to possess you; and my determinations I always accomplish. Consider the man who speaks to you. Look attentively upon him. Reflect on his resources, and acknowledge that resistance were absolutely useless."

"Monster!" cried the terrified Julia. "Let us instantly descend, or my instantaneous precipitation to the earth shall convince you of my courage and my abhorrence."

horrence." With these words the agonized girl made an effort to lean over the side of the boat. In her look despair and determination were powerfully expressed. The Count, unmoved by her distress, but apprehensive of the effects of her resolution, immediately changed his mode of procedure. Persuasion, he saw, would be fruitless, and sophism unavailing. To entreat were to exasperate her, and to threaten were only to fortify her opposition. Her death would rob his licentiousness of a victim, and leave his vengeance unsatisfied. And her death, it was manifest, would be the immediate effect of any repetition of insult, of any violence. Any violence! yes, capable of every crime, the horrible libertine dared at that moment to meditate the grossest of injuries.

"Well, well," said he, with well-affected gaiety, and placing himself so as to prevent the threatened effects of her desperation, "I perceive our French gallantries are not entirely to your taste. I therefore, from this moment, relinquish and abjure them; and to convince you, Miss Bolton, of my sincerity and contrition, you shall be instantly gratified in your desire to descend." He then caused a rapid discharge of the gas, and threw out an anchor. The machine quickly descended, and the anchor caught a low rock. The gas still continuing to escape, the boat touched the ground, and the silken globe above, now nearly flaccid, became troublesome to their heads. The Count having helped Julia to land, followed himself; and placing some heavy stones in the boat, he left the balloon

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to empty itself gradually and sink upon the earth.

Thus were all his intentions defeated. No advantage had he been able to take of her terrour and surprise. No current of air had enabled him to bear her off to a remote province, which was an exploit he had basely projected; and her former good opinion of him was utterly and for ever destroyed. To trace the course of his thoughts, since her declaration of suicide, would be to follow a villain in the unfeeling adherence to profligate principles, and the cool conception of habitual vice. He spared her only to reserve her for miseries, compared with which death would have been a blessing; and irritated by disappointment and defeat, he now swore to himself never to relinquish his hellish enterprize against this unhappy girl, till he

had accumulated on her innocent head the united horrours of shame, contempt, and infamy; till he had poured into her guileless heart the poisons of remorse, destruction, and despair. Malignant libertine! but for thee, the flower of virgin innocence would have still blown in tranquil security, defended from every storm, and secure against every blast. It now flourishes in the bloom and pride of youth, and health, and beauty, an object of esteem, respect and love; and shalt thou, ruthless barbarian! pluck it from its stalk, and expose it to wither, faded and despised, without support and destitute of beauty? Shalt thou cause it to droop, a thing of indifference, and soon, perhaps, to perish, deserted and degraded, avoided and abhorred.

When the alarm was given of the rope that

that secured the machine having given way, several men and horses were sent, with all possible expedition, in the direction that the balloon was seen to take; and immediately on its descent, three servants with as many horses arrived at the spot where it landed. One of the horses was supplied with a side-saddle: this Julia mounted. The Count took another, and they proceeded to the *chateau*, attended by a servant.

On their way home she preserved a mournful and a dignified silence. She felt humiliated, and, though released from apparent danger, she felt alarmed. To remain any longer in the *chateau* would be horrible. To quit it instantaneously might be impossible. To acquaint her father with what had happened were to risk his safety. It would be to involve

him, perhaps, in an affair of honour with the desperate and merciless Count. To deceive him by any false information, or to withhold from him a considerable part of what she should profess to disclose, was what her pride and her honour equally forbade. To make a confidant of Theodore, and employ him as an agent, were indiscreet in the extreme, if not indelicate, and might even produce a quarrel between him and their formidable enemy. To urge a request to her father that they should quit St. Uldrich, without assigning a reason for their doing so, would probably receive little attention from him. In whatever manner she considered the subject, insurmountable or fatal difficulties presented themselves. The Count, who had an uncommon share of penetration, read the nature of her distress, and discovered

covered her several emotions in the various changes of her expressive countenance. —"We shall soon arrive at the *chateau*, Miss Bolton," said he. "How will you act? Will you exclaim, openly and loudly, against what you think my treachery and dishonour, and thus force me into desperation to justify or support an innocent artifice? Or will you, with magnanimity and good sense, forget an indiscretion which my sober reason abhors, and which nothing but the volatility proceeding from an extraordinary and whimsical situation could produce? I fear neither you nor your father, but I respect you both. I acknowledge the impropriety of my conduct, and I entreat your forgiveness for it. Drive me not to extremities. I feel and I acknowledge, with heartfelt shame, the indignity that my thoughtless-

ness offered you, and I now supplicate your pardon. Grant me this favour, and never while I live shall I forget your goodness, nor ever again violate towards you the duties of delicacy and decorum. Ah! are the gates of mercy to be closed against me? or may I enter the temple with a fearless heart, and bless the goodness that vouchsafes to accept my confession and repentance?"

To this Julia made no answer. She knew not what to reply. But her silence, and the undecided expression of her features, sufficiently conveyed to her artful companion that he had nothing to apprehend.

Supper had been just served when they arrived. Great was the exultation, and loud were the congratulations at their escape. Our female aeronaut threw herself

self upon the bosom of her father, and, as he kissed her with rapture, wept bitterly in his arms. He, good man, attributed her tears to her agitation and to her late terrour.

Excessive was the curiosity, and innumerable were the inquiries about their adventures. The Count endeavoured to satisfy the former, and to answer the latter; but Julia requested permission to retire to rest, which, after such an excursion as she had taken, was readily granted.

He then proceeded to relate what had happened, and only omitted two circumstances; one was his detaching the rope that had secured the balloon, and the other his base and ungenerous conduct towards Julia.

Never was an extraordinary story nar-

rated with more propriety or more grace; and never was the Count more instructive or entertaining.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

E fu pur ver, che dal sasso marino
Gittarsi in mar lo vide a capo chino.

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Danger! whose limbs of giant mould
No mortal eye can fix'd behold,
When forth he stalks a hideous form,
Howling amidst the midnight storm;
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep.

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Environ'd round by deathlike gloom, I hear
Destructive tempests howl, and feel the spot
Whereon I stand trembling beneath my feet
With sad and dreadful quake, denoting all
Perdition can inflict; while o'er my head
Huge fragments loosely hang, upon whose frown
Destructive demons wait.

. . . . . .

Come on, Sir; here's the place—stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
———The murmuring surge
That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

. . . . . .

Oh! woman, woman! When to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no greater fiend.

In the territory of St. Uldrich, and between the *chateau* and the sea, lay a mountainous, sterile,

sterile, unpeopled region. The mountain, at its extremity, abruptly terminated in an immense rocky cliff, at a frightful height above the water. To creep on one's face and look down from it, was an act of courage beyond the powers of ordinary men. The mind revolted from the most distant possibility of falling into such a horrible abyss; the limbs shrunk involuntarily from the audacious attempt, vertigo seized the brain and dizziness the sight.

The cliff shelved inwardly from its top to the bottom, so that a line dropped perpendicularly from it, would, below, be some thousands of feet from its base. The edge of this enormous and immeasurable arch was sharp and bare. A gulph of deadly gloom and dread extent lay below Everlasting night frowned within the hard, rough, black, tremendous vault, where

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ruin and desolation seemed to have established their dominion. No human being was so forlorn or so desperate as here to venture. No samphire seeker, no fisherman, no fowler, was to be seen. All was a dreary uniformity of horrour. Pride and intrepidity were annihilated by the sullen magnificence, the appalling sublimity of this awful waste, and man, here, shrunk into littleness, and felt the imbecility of his nature.

The Count, by constitution daring and adventurous, had when a boy practised here those terrifick exploits related of the daring inhabitants of the Feroe Islands. Sitting in the bight of a rope, and holding a long pole with an iron crook at its end, he would order himself to be lowered gradually to a depth of several hundred feet,

care

care having been first taken to make that part of the edge of the cliff on which the rope passed (and which edge was of one continued naked rock) round and polished. The bight on which he sat being loaded with a great weight of lead, he was enabled to keep himself in such a swing, from the commencement of his descent, that even at the depth of three hundred feet, he at each oscillation could touch the surface of the retiring arch, from which pushing himself back with all his strength, a sufficient impetus was obtained to bring him again within reach of it. When he saw a roughness in the rock which might be caught with his crook, he would sometimes fasten himself to it, enjoy the frightful sublimity of his situation for a while, (an incalculable weight of ruin impending over

over him) and then plunge again with unparalleled fearlessness into the unlimited profundity of the abyss.

The mountain boys, with trembling limbs and anxious admiration, would gaze, their eyes half averted, at his deeds, as they lay crouched on the verge of the precipice above: and the mariners of a coasting vessel would sometimes be unwilling witnesses of what I relate, and would, incredulous of such mortal daring, piously and naturally invoke the protection of the saints against the pranks of the flying demon of the rock, for such they thought and termed him.

In winter, when the desolateness of this place, which was emphatically called *the grave,* was aggravated to a degree of indescribable horrour, when the rain fell in torrents,

torrents, when the tempest reverberated with deafening impetuosity within the infernal arch, when the sea lashed with irresistible fury against its rocky foundations, when the thunder pealed with incessant roar along its frowning sides, when no rays illuminated its tartarean gloom but those of the forky lightning; then would the dauntless boy chiefly delight to play his gambols. Amid the raging of the elemental war, and the seeming ruin of nature, he would swing, fearless and unconcerned, through the chaos, be covered with the foaming waves, be blown about by the angry storms, be scorched by the rapid lightnings: he, all the time, challenging death and destruction with a defiance, an exultation, that no other being could have dared, or would have felt. While I write

write my hand shakes, my frame shudders, my blood grows cold; but such was Count Egfryd when a boy.

In the course of his terrible researches, he chanced, one day, to fasten his crook on a projecting point, behind which was a cavity that attracted his observation. It was about one hundred feet below the brink of the precipice. Having drawn himself close to it, he perceived that this cavity sunk and extended into the rock. Before it was a ledge of five feet in breadth and two in depth, affording a standing place. The projecting point on which he had fastened his crook was in this ledge. Possessing as much curiosity as courage, he alighted on it, quitted the rope that he descended by, and left it on the ledge secured by the leaden weight. Romantick as he was then, warm and enthusiastick, what

what must have been his delight at perceiving an aperture in the face of the cliff, branching into extensive and lofty subterranean passages? For want of light he was compelled to retire without then being able to ascertain either their boundary or their shape. Having resumed his rope, he launched with precipitation from the ledge, pulled the string, which was the signal to his attendants to draw him up, instantly supplied himself with matches, tinder, flint and steel, together with some *flambeaux*, and again descended.

Having landed a second time on the ledge, he struck a light, and with a *flambeau* penetrated a recess, till then unvisited and unseen by mortal. Its mouth, which was about six feet square, and which opened on the sea, was the termination of an avenue of twenty feet long, that gradually enlarged

enlarged as it receded from the opening, and passing horizontally into the mountain, led to a large lofty cavern of irregular shape and singular appearance. The numerous columns that it contained of fantastical shape, the natural fret-work of its variegated misshapen sides, the irregularities of its grit floor, the whimsical distribution of its sparry ornaments, here in a regular congeries of brilliant crystallizations, and there, in rude and glittering heaps of seemingly ostentatious magnificence, and innumerable stalactites reflecting a thousand splendid colours, formed a spectacle at once grand and extraordinary. The view was closed by a dusky layer of iron ore and a thick stratum of coal.

On continuing his search he found other passages and cavities, some of which were

high and capacious. They all bore a striking resemblance to the outer cavern, and through one of them a stream of water of considerable breadth and depth flowed with rapidity. The wonders of these subterraneous recesses were many and varied.

The fervid fancy of the boy was charmed with the scene. It resembled what he had read in fairy tales. He considered himself the sole and rightful proprietor of this terrible retirement, and he resolved never to hazard its loss, or the profanation of its solemn character, by a disclosure of his discovery. Here he could live in solitary state, at least here he should pass his choicest and his happiest hours. He had found a treasure, which to be preserved must be concealed. The natural closeness and craft of his disposition enabled him to keep a resolution of secrecy, which, under the

the same circumstances, no other boy could have adhered to.

Under pretence of sporting, he caused a hut to be erected near the precipice, and by degrees, and without suspicion, he contrived to furnish his newly-obtained possession with a bed, a stove, and other articles of convenience. He had acquired such dexterity and strength in the use of his rope, that he, after some time, required no assistance to be lowered, but, having secured it above, he would slide down to its very extremity and climb it up with perfect facility. When he wished to rest himself, he had learned a method of twisting it about his limbs and body, so as to render any exertion, to prevent him from slipping down, unnecessary, and this at a distance from the sea, which, not even

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in Feroe, could be reflected on without horrour.

To complete his eccentrick arrangements, he had a strong iron ring sunk and soldered in the rock above, within a few feet of the precipice's edge. To this ring he fastened one end of his rope, and to prevent the possibility of losing the means of ascending, when in the cavern, should the fastening by any accident be untied, for his cautious mind, even then, could guard against the remotest contingencies, he attached a second rope, not visible above, to a projecting flint immediately below the sharp border of the abyss, so that having the end of it on the ledge, he could at all times ascend within a few inches of the brink, and thus scramble up. This was a resource against a misfortune that

that was barely possible, but a misfortune that cannot be thought on without shuddering; for were he in the cavern without his rope, he must necessarily perish. No sound he could utter would be heard, no signal he could make would be seen, and there, hopeless of all relief, he must have died of hunger.

The young Egfryd had practised in this school of terrour so long, that, at length, the passion of fear in his breast was completely suppressed, if not extinguished. Hither he was accustomed to resort in fits of gloom and periods of despondency, from his boyish days even to the period at which this history commences. He ever found a strange delight in sitting at the cavern's mouth, surveying the horrours of the grave, and brooding over the black objects of his wicked mind.

Hither his preposterous vengeance determined to transport the hated Theodore; and here the unfortunate Julia was, perhaps, to end her days. Here had been already, here now existed, a female inhabitant, Marie de Solase. Wretched woman! worthy tenant of such a mansion! Better would it have been for thee, hadst thou suffered the sentence of the law, the death of ignominious torture, for the murder of thy husband, than drag on a horrible existence in these caverns, bereft of every comfort, plunged in the depths of solitude and darkness, and exposed to never-ending misery and despair, than be buried alive as thou art now. Willingly would I avoid the painful task of describing another miscreant; I abhor wicked characters, and I shrink from their portraiture, but her's is a figure in this historical piece that must be given.

Marie

Marie de Solase, whose story ranks high in the record of crime, had been the adulterous wife of an advocate in Bourdeaux whom she had murdered. The circumstances were peculiarly atrocious. For this she was sentenced to be broken on the wheel, but her paramour the Count, who was accessory to her crime, by the agency of Conrad and Gaspar, and by the liberality of his bribes, rescued her from this fate, and had her carried to a spot contiguous to his hut on the precipice. From the hut he saw the two villains conduct her to the appointed place and retire, and when he had satisfied himself that they were out of sight, he went towards her, now overcome with fatigue, and proposed to her to become a resident in the cavern. She, in momentary dread of arrest and a cruel death, and convinced of the impos-

sibility of escape from a country, where every one knew her, where every one was her enemy, and where all were in search of her, embraced the offer. The Count then tied her to a chair, and lowered this to a sufficient depth by a rope fastened to the iron ring. What her feelings were in this situation I shall not attempt to describe. He immediately afterwards descended himself in his usual way, and having landed on the ledge, pulled by means of a string the chair towards him, and brought her into the recess. He promised to supply her regularly with provisions and other necessaries. He pointed out to her the stratum of coal as an inexhaustible body of fuel, and he instructed her in an expeditious way of catching fish in the running stream.

Why did he take all this trouble? Why? ah!

ah! who can account for the perverse aberrations of depravity? Perhaps he intended the cavern as a gaol for the objects of his hatred, and required a gaoler whose cruelty should second his resentment. Perhaps his boisterous passions, his irregular desires, called for the active obedience of desperate vice, or the base submissions of meretricious profligacy. Perhaps his morbid and restless appetites demanded the society, if society it may be called, of the vitious and proscribed; and Marie de Solase was not only submissive, vitious, cruel and proscribed, but beautiful.

Her age might be thirty, and her person was tall, plump and well proportioned. Her hair and eyes were black, and her complexion was of the deepest brown. Her features were regular and handsome, but her look exceeded the powers of de-

lineation. It was that malignant, penetrating, merciless expression, with which the head of Medusa petrified beholders. There was a spirit of enterprize, an extent of talent, a darkness, a depth, an audacity, a hardness in her countenance, that rendered it demoniacal. When she tried to soften its inflexibility and to seduce, it was like sweetening the poisoned bowl, or gilding the pointed stiletto. It was death concealed behind the semi-transparent mask of beauty. Perdition and she were one. She was constitutionally dissolute, but she was susceptible of love, and while she loved, no human attachment could exceed in ardour the passion she professed. She was capable of any sacrifice and any desperation ; she could feed upon hope, and exist upon a look : but quick as the transient gleam of a winter's

sun,

sun, and fickle as the dubious current of a winter's wind, she could desert and loathe the object of her partiality, and pant for the possession of another, to whom perhaps she had never spoken. The Count had the art to make her believe that it was his love for her which induced him to preserve her life, and he had the ingenuity to convince her that there were no other possible means to attain this object, than those which he employed. To rescue her from death he had employed his fortune and ingenuity, and risked his reputation, and to obtain for her a pardon he promised to exert all his interest and activity.

On her side she affected gratitude, but she felt it not; she was incapable of feeling it. With consummate hypocrisy, she feigned submission and content in the dread of losing his protection, on which

her miserable existence depended, and in the hope of being enabled to escape to a distant country. Her abilities, her accomplishments, her personal attractions were such, that the Count insensibly became fond of her society, and neglected nothing that could render her wretched situation endurable. But such was his perfidy, such his selfishness, that he determined she should never quit her dungeon. To inspire her with chearfulness, and thereby promote his own gratification, he furnished her with many of the luxuries, and all the necessaries of life. She had musical instruments, drawing materials, a telescope and books; two little dogs, a parrot, a monkey, and a squirrel.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The furious tempest rolls with dreadful sound:
Air thunders, rolls the ocean, groans the ground.

. . . . . .

———Black he stood as night;
Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell.

. . . . . .

———The cold and flinty cliff,
'Gainst which the foundered vessel splits, presents
As kind an aspect to the shrieking wretch,
Who spends his dying strength in efforts vain
To hold some icy edge, whereby to cling,
As he then offered.

. . . . . .

Not Fancy on her wildest wing, nor Hope
That feeds on dreams, can picture succour now:
Yes, look aghast! The thunder goes to strike.

. . . . . .

Alas! Sir, are you here? Things that love night,
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves.

THE complaint which had confined Theodore to his chamber had left him. He was now able to walk out; and the morning after the adventure of the bal-

loon, he met Miss Bolton at the monument described in a former chapter. He was feeble and pale; she was dejected and sad; each looked at the other with that commiserating air of kind inquiry which soothes the mind and penetrates to the heart. To this was added, on her part, a blush at the recollection of their interview in the library; and on his, a sudden glow of animation and delight from the same cause. Neither had, since that moment, felt indifference or rest. For him, the conflict it produced in his breast, had, in truth, been the cause of his illness. The ardour of his disposition, the quickness of his feelings, and the acuteness of his sensibility, had fixed in his heart an unalterable, inextinguishable love, a love not less merited than it was pure, for the charming Julia; at the same time that the delicacy of

of his principles determined him to fly from her presence for ever, the disparity of their fortunes being in his opinion an insuperable bar to their union. For her, could she know his talents and his virtues; could she see the manly beauty of his countenance, the graceful proportions of his person; that countenance beaming with soul and gentleness, that person worthy of such a countenance; could she survey his forehead made to command, his Grecian nose indicative of nobleness, his lips so sweet in conversation, his eyes so eloquent and so bright, and the slender symmetry of his tall elastick figure; could she admire the ease of his motions, the elegance of his gait; could she hear a declaration of attachment from such a man; could she recline in his arms; could she remark in him as he embraced her the sensitiveness

of irresistible genuine passion; could she know that she was loved by him, and be indifferent? Ah, no! Accident had given to her observation the only object that nature would permit her to regard with affection: the only object, perhaps, in the creation that could be united to her. She felt that there existed between them a reciprocalness of sentiment, a congeniality, that promised and required the most intimate communion of soul. She indulged the delightful reflection of his sincerity and worth, she doubted not the truth of his declaration, the violence of his flame, she believed he was destined for her, and she resigned herself without a struggle, (alas! she could not struggle) to the sweetest and most dangerous of illusions.

With faltering accents she inquired after his health; with unfeigned pleasure she

she heard he was recovered; and with an agitated manner, and manifest confusion, she answered his questions about her aeronautick flight. His embarrassment was not less. He feared to trust his words, lest they should betray his emotions; his looks, lest they should convey his admiration; his tones, lest their softness should indicate his disorder. All he loved was before him, but stern honour prohibited the indulgence of any hope. He was distressed, and for a moment irresolute. Roused, at length, by an effort of pride, he said—"Miss Bolton, we shall soon part, perhaps for ever. To-morrow I shall quit the *chateau*, and as I may not see you again alone, you will excuse me for declaring now that never while I live shall your image be absent from my thoughts; never, never, shall I cease to pray for your happiness.

piness. It were——."—"Part for ever! Quit the *chateau!* Mr. Dalbert, you do not mean to leave us so suddenly?"—"Indeed, I must."—"That is unfortunate. I wished to consult you on an affair of some consequence—perhaps I wanted your assistance, but——." Here Julia checked herself. She already repented having said so much. She had intended to keep from Theodore's knowledge the Count's misconduct, but unused to concealment, and betrayed, in part by her confusion, and in part by her apprehensions, into an indiscretion, she believed that she ought not now to withhold any part of her communication.—"But you fear to employ me," said Theodore, continuing her speech.—"No, but I fear to give you trouble, and I fear the effects of your warmth."

Having assured her that no affair that concerned

concerned her would be considered troublesome by him, and protested that nothing like anger or resentment should appear on his part, let the cause of excitement be what it might, she made a disclosure to him of all that had passed between her and the Count. As she spoke a tear of outraged virtue stole gently down her crimsoned cheek, while the high spirit and ingenuous disposition of Theodore broke forth, now in exclamations of horrour, and then in the apostrophizing accents of indignation, or appeared in his looks of sympathizing concern, or spoke in the sighs of tenderness that issued from his commiserating breast.

What was to be done? Julia must quit the *chateau*, but Mr. Bolton must not be informed of her motives. There was difficulty in this, and perhaps address and

stratagem

stratagem were requisite. They considered the subject in every point of view, and at length it was determined that, for her greater security, Theodore should remain at St. Uldrich till her departure, and that they both should use every possible persuasion with her father to continue his tour without delay into Italy.

They went to seek him that moment, and Miss Bolton, in the language of importunity and impatience, urged her suit so strongly, that he consented to depart in a few days; at the same time he hoped, he said, that Theodore would accompany them till their return into England; upon the terms which I have elsewhere mentioned. This was presenting to a starving man a plenteous repast. It was a helping arm extended to a drowning wretch. It was a rich prize in the lottery to a ruined merchant.

chant. It was a limpid well to the thirsty traveller of the desert. But Theodore hesitated. He had been solicited before by this good man to do so, but he durst not trust himself near Julia; he durst not expose himself to the influence of her charms, and he dreaded the baseness of a clandestine attachment.

He shook his head, stammered out his acknowledgments and his gratitude, and was preparing to utter an unwilling negative, the conclusive and irrevocable *no*, when casting a look at Miss Bolton's countenance, he there caught a glance, oh! such a glance! What reproach, apprehension and entreaty did it not convey? With what earnestness did it not supplicate, with what softness did it not upbraid! Every fibre in his frame received and confessed the eloquence of its magical expression.

pression. His blood rushed in impetuous currents through his veins, and his heart throbbed with violence and transport. His organs of speech acknowledged the wondrous potency of the charm, and he promised all that Mr. Bolton required. In this he acted weakly, perhaps ignobly. I attempt not to excuse him. But I will say that there are few who, in his situation, could have acted otherwise.

What important consequences may be deduced from trivial causes! How curious to follow trifling occurrences to their final effects, sometimes fatal, at other times beneficial! How often does poverty or riches, misery or happiness, death or life, depend on a circumstance apparently unimportant as the flight of a feather!

Julia was fond of birds, and she had, on her arrival at Bourdeaux, purchased two gold-

goldfinches, of that variety called cheverel; they were male and female, were quite tame, would answer when called, (he Manon, and she Manette) and even fly upon the finger. They had a nest, formed of fine moss, silk and camel's hair, in the centre of a little glass house, and were, when Julia purchased them, hatching five eggs. In a state of domesticity, the period of incubation is often delayed beyond the natural season. She became so fond of these intelligent, beautiful little creatures, that when she went to St. Uldrich, she took their house and them with her in the carriage; but the male met with an accident there, the second day after their arrival, that frightened her exceedingly. He had gone out of his house, which was always open, and was standing at Julia's window, when a hawk, that the servants

kept

kept about the *chateau*, darted on it, and though its mistress flew immediately to its rescue, one of its legs was broken.

Her grief on the occasion was extreme, and she brought the little sufferer with tears in her eyes to Theodore. He looked at the wound and undertook its cure. Her reliance on his humanity and skill was such that she left her favourite with him. And truly the tenderness and attention he bestowed on it justified her good opinion, and far exceeded whatever imperial wealth or despotick power has been able to purchase or extort from venal physicians or trembling attendants. He first restored the fractured bone to its proper situation, and then applied a bandage to keep it straight. To prevent the creature from injuring itself by any exertion, he put it into a cage barely large enough to contain

tain it, and this he would sometimes carry in his bosom, in order to communicate to the poor bird the advantage of kindly warmth. Manon was not insensible of his cares. It would greet his visiting looks with its sweetest notes, and even embrace his finger with the grateful pressure of its bill.

In a few hours after the conversation, in which Mr. Bolton, Julia and he, had, as I have related, agreed on a speedy departure from the *chateau*, a person, not known to Theodore, accosted him, and said that he was sent by Madame Dalbert, his mother, who wished to see him at the village of Du Quesney, on the borders of the territory of St. Uldrich, where she was waiting to communicate to him some affair of importance. Supposing that she had declined approaching the *chateau* from motives

tives of delicacy, as she was acquainted with neither the Count nor the *Comtesse*, and knowing that she had a journey to perform which would bring her through Du Quesney, he immediately departed, on foot, with the messenger, who was a young man of simple appearance, and who remained behind at a respectful distance as they walked towards the village.

Theodore would have taken one of the Count's horses, as he was still weak, but he disdained to be indebted to him for any accommodation. He had entered a village which was shaded by a thick plantation of larch and chesnut trees, when, suspecting no danger, he received from behind a sudden stroke of a loaded stick. The violence of the blow stunned and threw him. It had been given by his treacherous attendant, by whom and Gas-

par

par Pontgebre, who now rushed forward from a thicket where he had lain concealed, the unhappy youth was in an instant bound and rendered incapable of resistance.

In some moments he recovered, in part, the powers of reflection, and was sensible of his extreme danger. He dreaded every evil that human nature may endure, and every outrage that brutal violence may inflict. The perturbation of his thoughts was encreased by the mystery that attended this proceeding, and by the *linguaggio grossalano,* or ruffian dialect of Naples, in which the two miscreants conversed. With the presence of Gaspar he associated the dread of being butchered, and the ideas of mischief, assassination and Count Egfryd. The conduct of this nobleman towards Miss Bolton had rendered him, since her disclosure in the morning, an object of

suspicion

suspicion and abhorrence to the virtuous Theodore, who possessed sufficient penetration to perceive that the attentions bestowed on the father and daughter, the pressing invitations which had led them to the *chateau,* and the ascent of the air-balloon, were all to be traced to the blackest designs. He had already believed the Count capable of any crime; he now recollected the *critique,* and he shuddered to think of the revenge of such a man.

"What! you Gaspar Pontgebre," (on whose brutal brow at that moment hung treachery and murder) "attack me a second time, after my conduct towards you! surely you do not forget my kindness?" —"Oh, Sir! as to that you acted very kindly to me, I know, but I am only doing my duty now. This handy lad you see here, that knocked you down so neatly,

is

is a new associate that I recommended to my employer. I knew him aboard ship, and was acquainted with his merits. But we are losing time: come this way, if you please, and we can talk as we go on."

So saying he dragged Theodore into a green lane that terminated in a path up the mountain.—"Now, Sir," said Gaspar, "first and foremost take notice, that if we should meet with any person, you must not speak; the first word you utter in that case shall be your last. Look at this machine. It is an air-gun. It contains a bullet that shall enter your heart, if you disobey this order. It makes no noise, and when you fall we shall say you are a madman, whom we are conducting to Deverac-au-parc, and that you have sunk into a fit that you are subject to. Believe me nobody will be very curious to in-

quire further, or inclined to prevent our carrying you off. Such are my instructions."

Theodore looked at the villain and then at the machine, and raised his eyes to heaven in silent horrour. To address himself to the feelings or compassion of such wretches, he thought would not only be useless, but humiliating. He therefore observed a haughty silence.—" Aye, aye, my master, you may sulk and frown as much as you please, 'tis little we mind you," cried the younger ruffian. They hurried him on so fast, that they soon reached the path and began to ascend the mountain. It was evening, and a lurid sky threatened a tempestuous night. No human being did they meet, no living creature did they see, save a solitary ass that sought a scanty meal among the heath and brambles,

brambles, some gulls flying with rapid wing towards the south, as if anxious to escape to a less inhospitable region, and a distant *chamois* skipping among the rocks.

Their footing was slippery and insecure, and Theodore, his hands being bound, became soon fatigued. He inquired how much further they were to advance, and what was their object, for he no longer dreaded assassination.—" We have three miles further to go," said the unfeeling Gaspar, " and our object is merely to obey orders. We are assured that you shall never again see the face of man, neither do I suppose you will. I know my employer now so well that I have every confidence in him, and have no doubt of the extent of his power. Do you think I would ever part, you alive, after what passed between you and I in Bourdeaux,

and what has happened this evening, if I was not convinced you would be deprived of the power of injuring me by any complaint? No, no, I am not so soft as that neither. We are ordered to leave you near the grave, tied to an elm tree that grows there, and to return to the town immediately; and a grave it will be to you, or I am much mistaken." Theodore cast down his head in mute despair.—"To tell you the truth," continued Gaspar, "I did not half like the job. I did not approve of putting myself in your power, do you see, if any accident should occur that would save your life. But there is no passing through this world without running some risk. Besides I have this in my favour, that nobody in Bourdeaux knows my real name or my present residence. My employer I believe guessed what

what would run in my mind, for in his letter he assures me positively you shall never be seen again, and he never was so liberal to me as on this occasion."

"What!" cried the prisoner, "to that fatal grave! Am I to be tortured in cold blood? Villains, unbind me! never shall I be forced to that scene of horrours! Rather kill me here." Uttering these words, he struggled violently to loose his hands, but without effect. He then threw himself on the ground and would not proceed. The assassins, unaffected by his distress, unmindful of the threats, the promises, the supplications, that he poured forth with the hurried vehemence of a man in extreme peril, and regardless of the resistance that he in vain employed, partly dragged, and partly carried their hapless

victim to the dismal tree. To this they bound him.

"What," cried the youthful miscreant to his companion, "if we were to hide hereabouts until we saw who would appear to the prisoner? we should thus have a clue to find our unknown employer, perhaps we should see himself."—"Bless your soul!" said the other, "how silly you are! To arrive here we have climbed a smooth bare rock for the last mile, and besides that, there is no hiding-place hereabouts. It is clear that any body standing there above could command a view of the smallest object for miles all about. It would be a miracle if we succeeded, and it is a hundred to one if we should not perish in the attempt. Our employer, who is at this moment looking at us, perhaps

haps listening to what we say, would certainly murder us; his precautions are wonderful, and the devil himself has not more ingenuity: for my part, I dread him more than I do the devil."—"I believe you are right," replied the other, "so we may as well be going. Good evening, *Monsieur*. Good evening, Sir."—"Oh, cruel men! Surely, surely, you will not, cannot, desert me in this forlorn and savage place? The night already advances, and promises to be inclement. I have been lately ill, and shall I be exposed to the horrours of such a situation, to the imminent and dreadful danger of being devoured alive by wild beasts? Do not, oh! do not, Gaspar, forget the time when I saved your life."—"Good evening, *Monsieur*, good evening," returned that ungrateful monster with a sneer, and he departed with the other.

The winds began to whistle. Darkness soon covered the face of nature. The sable car of night passed with frightful velocity across the canopy of heaven. The ancient tree shook forth abrupt and alarming sounds as it yielded to the hurried blasts. The raging of the sea against the cliff spread over the rocks and mountains the desolating accents of the grave. The howlings of distant wolves, caught by the growing storm, strike upon the terrified ear of Theodore. The black clouds discharge their torrents on his unprotected head. The storm every moment increases; the tempest rages; the thunder peals; the lightning strikes.—" God of nature! what duty have I neglected, what crime committed, to deserve this misery? Feeble and exhausted, am I to groan through hours of suffering, incapable of motion, till my murderer

murderer comes to plunge me, mayhap, into greater torment? Am I to stand, tied to this stake, till the starved, ferocious animals of the desert scent out their prey, and tear me piecemeal? Almighty Providence! pity my ravings, punish not my presumption. Thy justice is supreme. Thy wisdom is unspeakable." The unhappy youth bent his head, shut his eyes, thought on Julia, and prepared to die.

An hour of torture passed. The inclemency of the weather became yet more violent, and the moon had risen, rendering now to the organ of sight, what had before been only heard or felt. Though the lightnings appeared less vivid, the clouds were more black, and their furious encounters more terribly distinct. Hah! what fearful crash is that? The bolt of heaven strikes the lofty elm. It yields. It splits.

The quickness of the stroke, its violence, and a strong sulphureous smell, at once rouse and appal the prisoner. His head and back suffer severe contusions. He would kneel, but his cords forbid the attempt. He offers a pious ejaculation. Terrour has entered his very heart.—"Gracious, incomprehensible, Almighty Being! Thou——." He would have proceeded, but a rude hand suddenly grasped his throat.

"Villain, at length in my power, never shall you escape my hold. Do you know me, creature?"—"Count Egfryd, I expected this."—"Did you so? 'tis well. But did you expect what you are to meet? Know, imbecile, mischievous, pernicious animal, that this is the happiest moment of my life. I have you in my power, and that power is unlimited and to be equalled only

only by my vengeance. Never did man hate man as I hate you; and this hate I can indulge, can satiate, with absolute security."—"Hate me! Ah! what have I done to deserve your hate?"—"Done! more than your worst sufferings can repay. Much more than murder could requite. But my joy produces delay. We must from this. Come, my critical amorous adventurer, we shall try your fortitude."—With these words the Count placed a board to his breast, and slipped another between the tree and his back. Having tied both together, and secured his arms effectually, he released him from the shattered elm. In the back board was a hook, and to this a rope being fastened, the ferocious Count pulled the object of his vengeance forward to the precipice. Arrived there, he fastened the end of the rope to the iron ring,

and placed the miserable sufferer upon his feet.

The moon shone brightly, but the tempest raged, the thunders rattled, and the blue lightnings still shot their fiery darts across the firmament. The sea, inflamed and foaming, boiled in mountains, and rocked the foundations of the continent. All was visible, but all was aggravated by night. What during the day would have been obscure was now deadly, what had been deep became profound, what suspicious was terrible, what alarming, direful. Each cloud had the blackness of revenge, each wave a shade of death.—"Seest thou this cliff, fool?" said the nefarious Count in a triumphant voice. "Thou knowest it well; thou hast visited it from curiosity, now occupy it from necessity. Exhausted, powerless, thou now shalt be precipitated

into the abyss, thence never, never, never, to rise again. Hah, hah, hah, hah!" The fiend at this moment felt the transport of Satan when he ruined our first parents. His laugh made night more dismal, and gave even to *the grave* new horrour.

"Count Egfryd, hear me for one, only one moment. I have already endured more than ordinary torments. I merit not your wrath, nay I deserve your pity. If I cast myself on my knees before you, as I now do, upon this flint, if I prostrate myself at your feet, you may despise me, but you, surely, will not deny me your compassion. A widowed mother depends upon my exertions for her support. Upon my life your happiness depends. Yes, tremendous man, rob me of life, and the canker of remorse will never grant you a moment's ease. The hell you sought and deserved

deserved will follow you eternally. My murdered spirit will pursue your steps, and nightly hover over your sleepless couch. You will live wretched and abhorred, and will die unlamented, cursed, and for what? to revenge an imaginary injury. Imaginary it is. I never wronged you. I have esteemed, but I never despised, I have loved, but I never hated you. I criticised your work, it is true, but, upon my honour, and by all that man holds sacred, I knew not when I wrote whose work it was. I love Miss Bolton, I confess, but for that am I to blame? could I have supposed that *you* were my rival? Ah! let me conjure you, in this suppliant attitude, as you tender your peace, as you value your safety, as you regard your immortal soul, as you dread the Almighty justice, grant me my life; so may Heaven

shower

shower its blessings on your head, and may I sink into everlasting perdition, if ever I whisper to mortal ear a syllable of this transaction! Enjoy, then, the luxury of doing good, and bind me to your service by ties of eternal gratitude."

The cliff, against which the ocean was now vainly expending its fury, was not more cold nor more unmoved than the inexorable Count.—" This last humiliation was necessary to my triumph. Know, changeling, that I defy remorse and hell, that I laugh at your canting about conscience, and that in nature there does not breathe a thing so loathsome to my sight, so offensive to my thought as you. Your promises and your threats I alike deride. You believe in the existence, and rely on the power of your Providence; then why be terrified at the prospect of this precipice?

Your

Your terrours give your words the lie. Cease your sneaking supplications. Look at that fathomless abyss. Look!"

The malefactor about to be launched from the tree of justice into eternity; the wretch on the brink of the sulphurous chasm occasioned by an earthquake, and who expects to be swallowed alive at its next convulsion, feels serenity compared with what Theodore now suffered. It was a prospect to petrify the boldest.—"Look into that fathomless abyss, to that thou art condemned for ever. Into it. Away!"—"Oh! oh! oh! mercy! mercy! may God have mercy——" shrieked the agonized victim of cruelty and crime.

His shuddering frame, incapable of resistance, pushed impetuously into the horrid deep, lost the sensations of life before the visitation of death, but lost them only for a moment. Arrived to the length of the rope

rope that connected him with the world, a frightful distance of one hundred feet, his rapid descent received a check so violent, so shocking, that animation returned from the very poignancy of his pain, from the intenseness of his torture. Every bone felt as if it had been broken, every fibre as if 'twere cracked, every muscle as if torn. The blood experienced a sudden revulsion, that took from the springs of life their natural current. His breath failed. The spasms of expiring nature shook his limbs, a sanguine stream poured from his mouth. In this situation, intolerable, unparalleled and indescribable, lashed every minute by the angry waves, and driven by the winds through the infernal vaults of this interminable sepulchre, he remained not long. The evil spirit of *the grave*, the fearless, the inhuman Egfryd, with

with active intrepidity and devilish exultation, descended to the cavern. The tiger drew his prey into the den, and having removed him to the closest recess of the subterranean abode, chained him to a rock, and removed from his breast and back the boards that confined him. He still appeared dead, but animation was only suspended. After some time he heaved a deep sigh, opened his eyes with a vacant stare, and moved his limbs.

The pains which death had terminated, returned with returning life. Red hot irons applied to the flesh, boiling oil, lashes, pincers, flames, give not greater anguish than that which he endured. It was every where at once, and yet seemed to fly from limb to limb, from joint to joint, from organ to organ, from vein to vein, with a quickness and severity exceeding

ceeding the experience of all human suffering. He groaned, he writhed, he shrieked.—"He will be very well presently," cried his abominable persecutor. "I must now return to prevent suspicion. With you, *Madame*, (to Marie de Solase) I shall leave the wretch till my next visit, when I will make my final arrangements." He then ascended, and with him took the rope which was mentioned in the last chapter under the name of the second rope, lest Theodore recovering and breaking his chains, should attempt to escape by it; needless precaution! for who but Egfryd could have dared to use it?

Marie de Solase had for some time entertained jealousies of the merciless Count, and suspected him of an intention to trifle with her. The pardon he had promised to obtain for her, she despaired of procuring,

curing, and all her entreaties to have her escape to another country effected, he evaded with evident disingenuousness.

She looked on him as her oppresser, she conceived for him a rooted aversion, but her existence depended on his protection, and she was compelled to affect gentleness, gratitude and attachment. The arrival of Theodore was a new era in her captivity. Theirs was a common cause, and the profligate mutability of her nature already marked him as an object of her unworthy passion. She made for him a comfortable bed. She poured cordials into his mouth. She removed his wet clothes. She dried his hair, and she bathed his feet in warm water. The fatigue he had undergone, the agitation he had suffered, and the pains he had endured, had exhausted his strength, and brought on a crisis

which

which in a short time, maugre his pangs of mind and body, terminated in sleep. It was the last effort of nature to preserve vitality.

Marie de Solase meanwhile prepared a nutritious jelly for him when he should awake, corrected the disorders of her dress, heightened the attractions of her person, dried his clothes before a large fire, burned some perfumed pastiles, and hung poor Manon at a sufficient distance from the monkey. It is strange how it survived the rudeness of the treatment its master had received, but the wire of its little iron cage was strong, and had not yielded much to the pressure of the board, and Theodore's coat had protected it in some measure from the waves. The creature, however, was nearly dead with wet and fright, when its new mistress placed it in a warm situation. She gave it water in her thimble,

and

and some thistle seed which dropped from its master's pocket, and which is so well known to be their favourite food, that from *chardon* or thistle, comes *chardonneret*, the French term for a goldfinch. Escaped from his danger, Manon was not long till he rewarded her for her care with one of his sweetest chirps.

"Ah!" cries the incredulous critick, "silly author, what hast thou undertaken? Thy romantick pen having first lifted thee in a preposterous balloon, from which with the utmost difficulty thou escapedest, has now led thee into a cavern more horrible than that of the Cyclops. Thy heroine is in a castle exposed to the outrages of a villain, to whose arts and violence she must succumb: and thy hero is, at the commencement of thy work, placed in a situation from which no human exertion

ertion can rescue him. Unity will be injured, probablity outraged, and poetick justice violated. Where is thy judgment? Where is thy taste? I pity thy attempt, but it is wretched and will be despised. Thou wilt be forced to close thy tale before it is finished, or thou must be guilty of the absurdity of throwing down the cliff by an earthquake, or of saving Theodore by a miracle. This, or the clumsy resource of placing the Count on his untimely deathbed, where he is to confess all, and to prove the author a miserable dunce."

Criticks, criticks, cease your insulting insinuations. I have, according to the Psalmist, "chosen the way of truth." I describe nothing but what has happened. As I live I tell no falsehood. Faith-worthy witnesses can corroborate my facts. I am

past

past the age of invention; "on my eyelids," as on Job's, "is the shadow of death," and my character is above the reach of aspersion. A moral principle demands this sacrifice of my repose. My abhorrence of vice and my love of virtue require this narration. For once, throw away your rules and your balances. Learn to estimate works not by calculation and measurement, but by genius, invention and utility. On the last I rely. My personages are uncommon, I know, and the incidents I relate extraordinary. But do I mention any thing that is beyond belief, any thing that is impossible? I said, and I repeat it, that it is my peculiar lot to be the historian of romantick realities, the narrator of seeming fiction. My children, to you I consign the task of vindicating my fame. To you I bequeath the happiness

ness of reaping the reward of my honest labours, of hearing my authority pronounced unquestionable, and of finding my book placed among the authentick records of morality.

But as I must draw scenes of novelty, surprise and horrour, gift me, oh Godwin! with thy magick pencil. As I must convey the emotions of virtuous hearts in situations of extreme difficulty and danger, and the tempests that rage in the bosoms of the impious and abandoned, teach me, master as thou art, to acquire thy rich and flowing style, and thy matchless powers of description. Who but thou has the talent of embodying fancy, and pursuing moral sensibility through all the intricacies of the human heart? Who but thou can create a new being, invest him with new capacities, and endow him with a refinement

and flight of soul that exceed our imitation, and almost demand our worship? Painter of nature! Man of eloquence! grant me a spark of thy genius, a breath of thy expression; so may my cautious finger copy the delicate shading of thy Falkland, and my fervid words convey a portion of thy St. Leon!

END OF VOL. I.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-street.

WORKS

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With the Reviewers' Opinion.

FALCONBRIDGE ABBEY,

A DEVONSHIRE STORY,

BY MRS. HANWAY.

5 vols. £1 7s. 6d.

"The fair Author of this work tells us in a Preface, which is written with peculiar energy, that, after a long lapse of time, she trusts her third Work for public perusal, written under many interruptions from ill health, which would certainly have been a plea for any defects that might have appeared, had the fire and spirit of her talents, already well known and duly appreciated by the Public, by her former valuable productions of "Ellinor" and "Andrew Stuart," been found to have evaporated. But our judgment is decidedly given in favour of a direct contrary position; for we are of opinion, that if "Falconbridge Abbey" does not surpass, it is certainly in no degree inferior, in the great points of either amusement or instruction, to either of her former public exertions.

"The *execution* does justice to the *design* pourtrayed; the characters are, in general, very strongly marked, and with many high touches of the pencil. Lady Falconbridge, although a rigid moralist and a strict disciplinarian, both in mind and manners, has all the humanizing virtues of the heart, which the various occurrences of the history finely draw forth. The whole of the Elderton family, which is powerfully delineated, exhibit instances of the temporary success of almost every species of infamy to attain the objects of their ambition; which, though gratified, ultimately terminates to their confusion, and indeed complete destruction; and that in a manner alike favourable to morality and probability, which should never be violated in any imitation of history, for such may be denominated a well-written novel. Sir Henry Falconbridge is a compound of imbecility and goodness of heart, his best-directed benevolence being frequently mixed with an almost infantine weakness, from a certain constitutional languor of disposition, and a want of mental energy. The natural son of this gentleman, who comes

comes very forward in the ſtory, and ſecures the eſteem and admiration of the reader by actions well calculated to command it, is, in every reſpect, a very happily-drawn character, evincing, in the progreſs of the action of the ſtory, the pureſt generoſity and utmoſt bravery, accompanied by the moſt unaffected ſenſibility; at the ſame time that he is a rare pattern of filial piety.

"The different intereſts of this "Devonſhire Tale" are ſo cloſely interwoven with each other, and are made ſo ſkilfully to connect, that, although they are, from that very circumſtance, more important as a *whole*, they are, by that proportion, leſs favourable to partial extract. We ſhall therefore refer our readers, with a good conſcience, to the peruſal of the work itſelf; after obſerving, that we have not a doubt, to apply her own words, "the public *en maſſe* will ſtill be found candid and liberal to her efforts for the amuſement of their leiſure hours." We will add, alſo, for the *inſtruction of their moſt ſerious ones*."

Gentleman's Magazine, March, 1809.

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